PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY
1863-1963

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY

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PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

[1963-64]

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[The Volume contains almost all the addresses & speeches delivered and papers read in the course of fifteen sessions of the Parliament of Religions held at Calcutta (1963–64) in connection with the Birth Centenary Celebrations of Swami Vivekananda]

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY

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SRI SRI RAMAKRISHNA

FOREWORD

The Parliament of Religions was one of the most important functions in the Birth Centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda, held in Calcutta in 1963. It was undoubtedly suggested by the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 which, apart from its other intrinsic merits, is indissolubly bound up with the life and teachings of Vivekananda. It was there that he first revealed himself to the whole world as one of the greatest spiritual forces in the modern age, and first voiced the message of Vedanta which it was the mission of his life to preach to the whole world. But Swamiji did something more. He emphasized the spirit of catholicity and tolerance and dispelled the illusion that any one religion might ever hold the position of supremacy over all others. In his final address to the Parliament he said: 'If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. ...In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, to him I say, Brother, yours is an impossible hope.'

It is recorded in the proceedings of the Parliament that these sentiments were not much appreciated by the Parliament, and very little approval was shown to these sentiments. Seventy years have passed since then—and another Parliament of Religions was held during the interval in connection with the Centenary Celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna—and it may be asserted without any fear of contradiction that the noble words uttered by Vivekananda in 1893 formed the keynote of the views expressed in the Parliament held in 1963, in celebration of the centenary of his birth, and, one may add, have now been the generally accepted creed of the world.

This would be evident from the following pages which contain the text of summary of the papers read and addresses delivered in the fifteen sessions of the Parliament of Religions beginning from the afternoon of the 29th December, 1963, and ending in the evening of the 5th January, 1964. It has not been possible to include all the papers and addresses, but altogether 58 of them are published in this volume excluding the Inaugural Address of the President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and the Opening Address and Welcome by the President, Swami Vivekananda Centenary. In his Inaugural Address Swami Madhavananda, the President Maharaj, has clearly enunciated the fundamental principles of religion which were preached by Swami Vivekananda and have since become the foundation of the great structure of the Ramakrishna Mission which was planned by him. The

President Maharaj concluded his oration in the hope "that the deliberations that will be held in this Parliament of Religions may help us implement into the life of the world the spirit of tolerance and acceptance of which Swami Vivekananda and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna were living embodiments."

That this pious hope has been fulfilled, at least to a large extent, will be testified to by this volume. It gives a fair idea of the variety of the topics discussed in the Parliament of Religions and the spirit behind these discourses. The noble ideals of catholicity and tolerance inculcated by Swami Vivekananda before the Parliament of Religions at Chicago have been echoed by the members who took part in the deliberations of the Parliament of Religions in Calcutta without a single discordant voice.

These members represent a cross-section of the different religious sects and philosophical schools and include many distinguished leaders of thought from foreign countries in Asia, Europe and America. The topics chosen by them are varied in character though each has a bearing on the two central themes, namely, the fundamentals of religion, and Vivekananda, the great exponent of the harmony of religions. Apart from the more well-known religions of the modern world, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, many ancient religions such as the Canaanite and Israelite, Sufi-ism and Zoroastrianism are discussed from the modern standpoint of their harmony. Religion has also been studied from the new angle of modern scientific age and stress has been laid upon the great object of all religions, namely, the growth of humanism and a spirit of co-operation among the followers of the different religions of the world. It is needless to add that the towering personality of Swami Vivekananda emerges out of all these discourses as the Great Guide of the future of humanity—a practical embodiment of the teachings of his Guru Sri Ramakrishna.

This volume is now presented to the public in the hope that the most valuable contribution of the Centenary celebration and its most enduring memorial may be accessible to those who could not attend the sessions of the Parliament and to the generations yet unborn to whom the name and fame of Swami Vivekananda would be a priceless asset.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity of conveying, on behalf of the authorities of the Centenary celebration, their sincere thanks to those who took part in the deliberations of the Parliament and also to those who sent their messages of goodwill for the success of the Parliament. Thanks are also due to those but for whose unwearied efforts this volume would not probably have been published within such a short time.

Calcutta
15th August,
1965

R. C. MAJUMDAR

PROGRAMME
OF
THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

The Parliament of Religions began its eight-day-long deliberations in fifteen sessions on the 29th December, 1963, in the tastefully decorated spacious Pandal at the Park Circus Maidan, Calcutta. It was attended by the most distinguished persons, mostly followers and admirers of Swamiji, from various parts of the world.

On Sunday, the 29th December, at 3-30 *p.m.*—the Inauguration of the Parliament of Religions was marked by Vedic Prayers by the Brahmacharins of the Ramakrishna Math and an opening song by Prof. Gouri Kedar Bhattacharya. The function was inaugurated by Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Srimat Swami Yatiswaranandaji Maharaj, the Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, presided over it.

Due to the indifferent health of Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj, though he was present, the inaugural address was read out by Swami Nityaswarupananda (Page 1). After the inaugural address, Mr. Justice P. B. Mukharji, the President of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Executive Committee offered a hearty welcome to the delegates and the assembled gathering (Page 6). Swami Sambuddhananda, the General Secretary of the Centenary Committee then read out the messages received on the occasion (Page 18), and Swami Ranganathananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, introduced the foreign delegates of the Parliament to the audience and each of the delegates spoke a few words, suiting to the occasion. Among the foreign delegates that were present this day were: Swami Prabhavananda of Hollywood; Swami Nikhilananda of New York; Countess Colorodo of N.Y., Mr. Christopher Isherwood, the famous author and playwright, Hollywood; Dr. M. M. Willay, Vice-President of the Minnesota University, U.S.A.; Dr. Mrs. Maria Burgi, Switzerland; Mrs. Hiltrud Ruestau, Germany; Prof. D. Dr. Georg Fohrer, Germany; Dr. Miroslav Novak, Czechoslovakia; Prof. Abraham N. Poliak, Israel; Mr. Nisshin Uchigaki, Japan; Prof. H. H. Kimura, Japan, and Mr. Kumao Kanaya, Japan. Prof. A. Chakravarty of Boston Univ., Mr. E. Luther Copeland and Prof. John Nosco of U.S.A. joined later.

Shri P. C. Sen, Chief Minister of West Bengal, also spoke on the occasion (Page 386). At the end, Swami Yatiswaranandaji Maharaj in his presidential address (Page 354) gave a fine lead to the momentous discourses of the Parliament of Religions. Swami Sambuddhananda then thanked eloquently the delegates and the gathering of about ten thousand people who had come to attend the Parliament.

From the 30th December, 1963 to the 5th January, 1964 the Parliament sat in two sessions, morning and evening, every day. The morning sessions were held at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Calcutta at 9 a.m., while the evening sessions were held in the Centenary Pandal at the Park Circus Maidan, Calcutta at 4 p.m. on holidays and at 6 p.m. on week-days. But the 5th January, 1964, being a Sunday, the morning session was also held at the Park Circus Maidan at 9 a.m. to accommodate more visitors. Opening and closing songs, thanksgiving and the General Secretary's announcements formed the features common to all the proceedings of these days. Hereunder we are giving the programme of the Parliament date-wise:

MONDAY, THE 30TH DECEMBER, 1963

Morning Session at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park at 9 a.m.

President: Prof. D. Dr. Georg Fohrer, Germany

Speakers:
(1) Prof. Batuk Nath Bhattacharyya, Calcutta (Swami Vivekananda and the present-day human values)
(2) Prof. Dr. Gustav Mensching, Germany (Message of Swami Vivekananda and its importance for the present world)—translated and read in his absence by Dr. Brahmananda Gupta, Calcutta
(3) Swami Pavitrananda, New York (Swami Vivekananda and the Future of India)—In his absence the paper was read by Swami Ranganathananda
(4) Shri Ramani Kumar Dutta Gupta, Calcutta (Swami Vivekananda's Gospel of Divine Humanism)

Evening Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 5 p.m.

President: Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee

Speakers:
(1) Brahmachari Premchaitanya, Hollywood (Swami Vivekananda through the eyes of an American)
(2) Capt. Bhag Singh, Calcutta (Sikhism)
(3) Mr. Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood (Swami Vivekananda and the West)

TUESDAY, THE 31ST DECEMBER, 1963

Morning Session at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park at 9 a.m.

President: Dr. M. M. Willay, Vice-President of the Minnesota Univ., U.S.A.

Speakers:
(1) Shri C. G. Kashikar, Poona (Activism in the Vedic Religion)
(2) Prof. D. Dr. Georg Fohrer, Germany (Universal ideas in the ancient Canaanite and Biblical Israelite religions)
(3) Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterjee, Calcutta (Ramakrishna-Vivekananda on the Harmony of all Religions)
(4) Prof. Amulya Sen, Burdwan (Religion & Politics)

Evening Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 4 p.m.

President: Swami Prabhavananda, Hollywood, Calif., U.S.A.

Speakers:
(1) Prof. Abraham N. Poliak, Israel (Indic Heritage in Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam)
(2) Dr. Mrs. Maria Burgi, Switzerland (Indian & Western Minds' structure and Swami Vivekananda)
(3) Dr. Roma Choudhury, Calcutta (Natmavit)
(4) Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, Boston University (Swami Vivekananda, a Modern Saint)

WEDNESDAY, THE 1ST JANUARY, 1964

Morning Session at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park at 9 a.m.

President: Dr. Mrs. Maria Burgi, Switzerland

Speakers:
(1) Prof. Hiralall Chopra, Calcutta (Sufi-ism in India)
(2) Mr. Nisshin Uchigaki, Osaka, Japan (What Swami Vivekananda means to me)
(3) Mr. E. Luther Copeland, Banaras Hindu University (Towards Inter-Religious Co-operation)
(4) Prof. Santwana Das Gupta, Calcutta (Vedanta and the Social Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda)
(5) Dr. Sanat Kumar Rai Choudhury, Burdwan University (Universal Religion—Its concept and realisation). In his absence the paper was read by Principal A. K. Majumdar

Evening Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. Christopher Isherwood, Hollywood, California
Speakers:
(1) Bhikkhu Jagadish Kashyap, Varanasi (Buddhism)
(2) Prof. D. P. Sen, Calcutta (Philosophy as a spiritual quest)
(3) Dr. Satish Chandra Chatterjee, Calcutta (Hinduism)
(4) Mr. Humayun Kabir, New Delhi (Swami Vivekananda's contribution to religious understanding)

THURSDAY, THE 2ND JANUARY, 1964
Morning Session at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park at 9 a.m.

President: Prof. John Nosco, U.S.A.
Speakers:
(1) Dr. Miroslav Novak, Czechoslovakia (Christianity)
(2) Prof. Mrs. Sobha Rani Bose, Banaras (Where Hindu Mysticism and Sufism meet)
(3) Dr. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar (The Educational Philosophy and ideas of Swami Vivekananda)
(4) Prof. Hideo Hridayakumara Kimura, Kyoto, Japan (Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and world peace)
(5) Dr. Govinda Chandra Dev, Dacca (Swami Vivekananda, the Universalist and Humanist). The paper was read by Swami Ranganathananda
(6) Swami Satprakashananda, St. Louis, U.S.A. (The Buddha, Sri Sankaracharya and Swami Vivekananda). The paper was read by Swami Ranganathananda

Evening Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 5 p.m.

President: Mahamandaleswar Sri 1008 Swami Krishnanandaji, Govinda Math, Varanasi
Speakers:
(1) Dr. E. Asirvathan, Jabalpur University (National Integration through Religion)
(2) Prof. John Nosco, U.S.A. (Christianity & Hinduism—some points of creative exchange)
(3) Prof. A. R. Wadia, Bombay (Religion in the Scientific age)
(4) Pravrajika Atmaprana, Calcutta (Swami Vivekananda & India's Mission in the world today)
(5) Principal J. C. Banerjee, Calcutta (Humanism of Swami Vivekananda)

FRIDAY, THE 3RD JANUARY, 1964

Morning Session at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park at 9 a.m.

President: Mrs. Sophia Wadia, Bombay

Speakers:
(1) Dr. U. C. Sarkar, Chandigarh (Religion in the Modern World)
(2) Sm. Lila Latika Banerjee, Shillong (The Upanishads and the Religion of Brahma Samaj)
(3) Brahmakumari Krishna, Calcutta (Can Religion solve the Modern problems?)
(4) Prof. M. Chakravarty, Calcutta (Swami Vivekananda—a prophet of life)

Evening Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 5 p.m.

President: Dr. Miroslav Novak, Czechoslovakia

Speakers:
(1) Dr. A. C. Bose, Delhi (Fundamental ideas of the Vedas)
(2) Kazi Abdul Wadud, Calcutta (Islam)
(3) Mr. Kumao Kanaya, Japan (Indo-Japanese spiritual ties)
(4) Pravrajika Vedaprana, Calcutta (Message of Swami Vivekananda)

SATURDAY, THE 4TH JANUARY, 1964

Morning Session at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park at 9 a.m.

President: Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Calcutta

Speakers:
(1) Mrs. Hiltrud Ruestau, Germany (Swami Vivekananda and Max Muller)
(2) Swami Nikhilananda, New York (Philosophical basis of the harmony of religions)
(3) Shri Bagala Kumar Majumdar, Calcutta (Swami Vivekananda as a world teacher and apostle of universal religion)
(4) Shri Kshitindra Kumar Sen Gupta, Calcutta (Philosophy of Satyadharma)

Evening Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 5 p.m.

President: Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Annamalainagar
Speakers: (1) Swami Ranganathananda, Calcutta (Swami Vivekananda's synthesis of Science and Religion)
(2) Mr. F. S. Bamji, Bombay (Zoroastrianism)

SUNDAY, THE 5TH JANUARY, 1964
Morning Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 9 p.m.

President: Mr. Justice Sankar Prasad Mitra, Calcutta
Speakers: (1) Prof. Aruna Majumdar, Calcutta (Religion and Mysticism)
(2) Dr. J. Smith, Pondichery (Swami Vivekananda the Divine Awakener)
(3) Acharya Satyadeva Sastri, Gorakhpur (Essence of Upanishadas)
(4) Dr. D. C. Sircar, Calcutta (The Indian Father-god and Mother-goddess)
The paper was read by Prof. D. P. Sen

Evening Session at the Park Circus Maidan at 4 p.m.

President: Swami Nikhilananda, New York
Speakers: (1) Swami Hiranmayananda, Purulia (Revelation and Rationalism)
(2) Principal Amiya Kumar Majumdar, Krishnagore (Swami Vivekananda and Universal religion)
(3) Shri Saila Kumar Mukherjee, Finance Minister, West Bengal, Calcutta (A New Religion of the Age)

THE HOLY MOTHER

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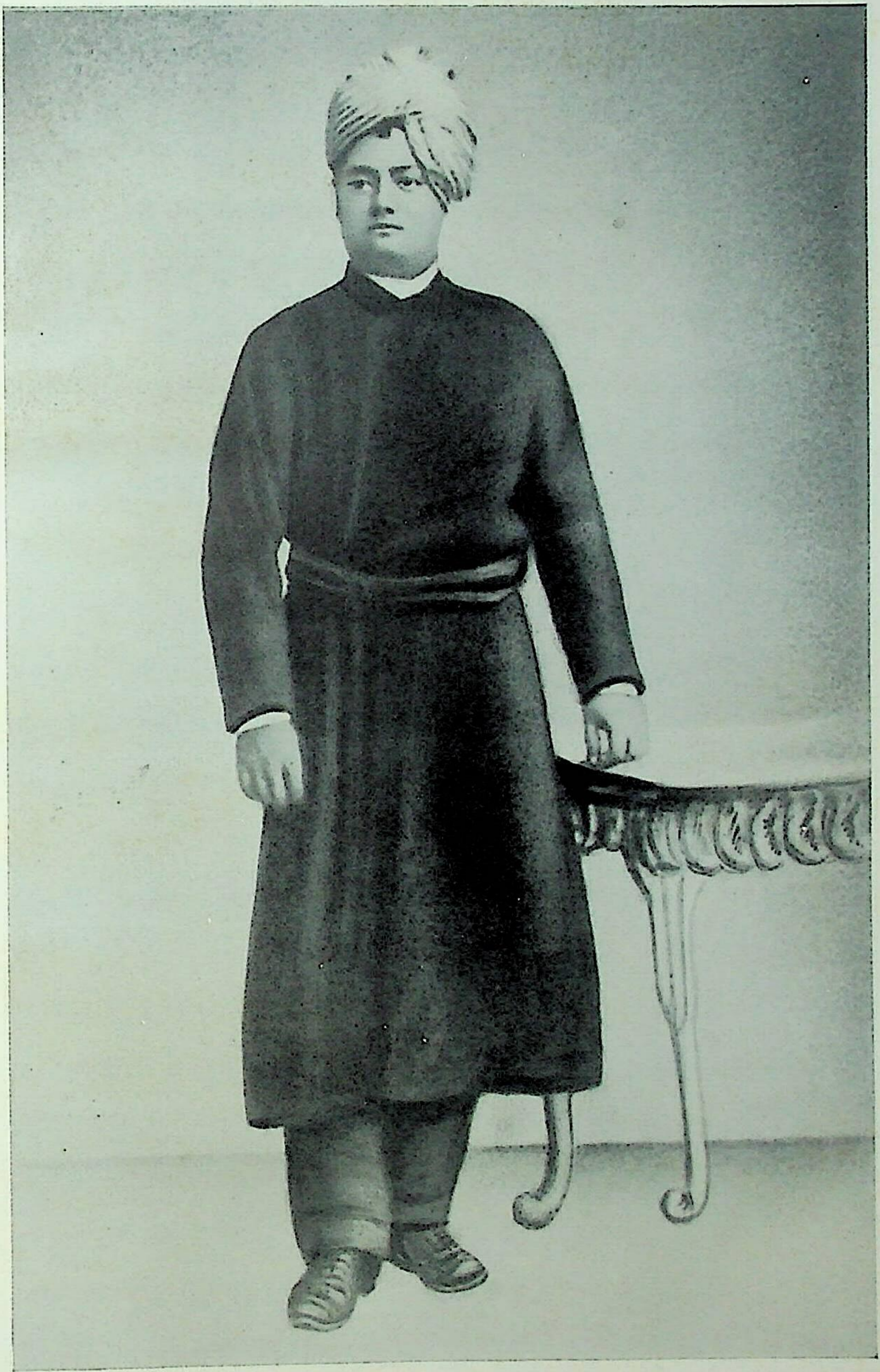

Swami Vivekananda entering the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, (1893.)

CHAPTER I

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj

President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur Math

Friends,

I am very happy to welcome you all here and inaugurate this Parliament of Religions in connection with the Birth Centenary of the Swami Vivekananda, in this very city of his nativity, which also heard Sri Ramakrishna preach the gospel of the harmony of all religions. People of various faiths from far and near have assembled here to find out the co-ordinating unity of the various faiths. If religion is to survive, and it must survive for the good of man, we have to compare notes and find out where we agree and on what basis or platform we can all unite and make a united front against irreligion, which is gaining ground everywhere. At this time, when nations are arming themselves for wars of offence and defence, it is meet that the followers of various religions should voice the message of love, peace and brotherhood to a mad world.

The word 'religion' is used in a vague sense to signify both the diverse external manifestations of religiousness and inner spiritual excellence. Truly speaking, spirituality begins where religiousness ends. Swami Vivekananda, therefore, made a distinction between spirituality or the inner core of religion and formal religion, and he defined the former as the manifestation of the divinity already in man. He believed that from this point of view, 'Confucius, Moses, Pythagoras, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Luther, Calvin, and the Sikhs, Theosophy, Spiritualism, and the like—all these mean only the preaching of the Divine-in-man'.

When talking of the fundamentals of religion, we have to remember that in the past each great religion of the world had to adapt itself to changing times, places and cultures, so that sects multiplied, which claimed exclusive authenticity for themselves. But the very fact that they differ, while adhering to the same originators or the same books, points to some basic fact of unity. The modern problem is to find out this unity not only among the different sects of the same religion, but also among all the religions of the world. We have emphasised the differences long enough; now is the time to emphasise oneness.

When we speak of the unity of religions, we have mostly in mind the forms in which they originally issued out of their founders, or as they are presented in the original books. Here, again, we are aware that even these original religions of the world are never identical when taken in their totality; for even in those early days they differed in language and forms of worship. The Indian method of solving this difficulty was to accept variety and yet keep the eyes fixed on unity. Sri Ramakrishna declared that just as a grain of paddy has two parts, the husk and the rice, so must each religion have its essentials and non-essentials to make it acceptable to ordinary human beings. That protective husk is also necessary just as much as a fence is necessary to protect a growing sapling. Besides, the growing mind has to ascend step by step, and the different forms of religion may well serve as the stages suitable for its expanding outlook. Forms cannot be ignored just because they are non-essential. Many essential portions of religions, again, though apparently contradictory, may not really be so, they may as well be complementary. 'I do not mean the different languages, rituals, books, etc., employed in various religions,' said Swami Vivekananda, 'but I mean the internal soul of every religion. I believe that they are not contradictory; they are supplementary.'

Thus we can lead a two-pronged attack against sectarianism by revealing their essential oneness and exposing the hollowness of their claim to exclusive possession of truth and the folly of magnifying differences and quarrelling over non-essentials. 'Our aim should be to widen the boundaries until they are lost sight of and to realise that all religions lead to God.'

This realisation of the sameness of the goal of all religions and this striving for bringing about their harmony, Swami Vivekananda inherited from his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, who proved by his own life and taught in clear terms that all religions are true. The history of India also impressed this upon Swamiji's mind. And this was the message that found expression in his very first speech at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893: 'My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true.'

This idea of acceptance marks out and emphasises the Indian point of view. We not only tolerate but accept all forms of religion as true and help them in all possible ways. All religions have their honoured places here, for they fulfil some felt needs. The watchword of India's civilization is 'unity in variety', which is nature's plan of the universe itself. It is only through harmony and brotherhood and toleration and help that the future destiny of humanity can be assured. Starting from toleration and proceeding through sympathy and help, India found the true solution of sectarianism in nothing less than acceptance. This idea was boldly preached by Swami Vivekananda who said, 'The one great lesson, therefore, that the world wants most, that the world has yet to learn from India, is the idea not only of toleration, but of sympathy. Nay, more, not only should we be charitable, but positively helpful to each other, however different our religious ideas and convictions may be.'

That this was not mere empty sentiment, but was borne out by facts becomes evident to anyone reading the history of India. We can cite how the Hindus built churches for the Christians and mosques for the Mohammedans. The Parsee refugees were granted asylum here, and Christianity was allowed to spread under St. Thomas. The idea underlying Indian culture was succinctly summed up and the motto for all future generations was supplied by the Rig-Vedic *mantra*: '*Ekaṁ sadviprā bahudhā vadanti*—Truth is one, but sages call it by various names.' This motto coloured all Indian endeavours in all fields of culture and civilization.

Along with a theoretical and practical recognition of the essential truth of all religions, some saints of the Middle Ages like Rāmānuja, Rāmdās, Kabīr, Nānak and Śrī Caitanya consciously followed a process of fusion of the best elements of each faith. Some modern religious reformers also followed the same method. This, however, did not find favour with the generality of people, as every attempt along this line only created new sects without resolving fundamental differences. Swami Vivekananda did not stand for such eclecticism, which would reject certain features of a religion and borrow others from elsewhere, thus trying to create a body of religious beliefs and practices which would find universal acceptance. Rather, he accepted each religion in its totality, and if he spoke about the reform or rejection of some outer forms, it was from the motive of avoiding unnecessary communal friction, which cuts at the very root of spirituality. He stood for making the spiritual outlook fuller in content and more catholic and rational, without which few faiths have a chance of survival in the modern world of science and international dealings. Swami Vivekananda invited all to understand their own faiths better in the light of the rational philosophy of Vedānta and the psychological revelations of Yoga. He was not also against conscious assimilation, but he strongly condemned imitation. His method of establishing harmony was active cultivation of brotherhood along with firm adherence to one's own personal and sincere way of approaching God.

Sects there will be, just because men and their environments differ; but sects in themselves are not the causes of dissension, though often enough they fan the flame of organised brutality. Truly speaking, real harmony will never be achieved so long as the animal in man is not brought under control. Selfishness colours most of our behaviour and philosophies of life. Our neighbours are forced to adopt our points of view and our ways of life through personal contempt, social hatred and ostracism. Group selfishness also takes the form of political oppression, racial hatred and communal fanaticism. And all this is done in the name of spiritual regeneration. But politics and not religion is to be blamed for this sorry state of things.

The remedy for this is not less religion, but rather more of it. History has proved more than once that the conclusion of insincere treaties and pacts, which goes by the name of diplomacy, can never bring peace. Nor can any war—cold or hot—do so. For real universal brotherhood, religious people have to be up and doing in a united way, and not leave the matter in the hands of the politicians alone; for along with saving religion from irreligion, the onerous task of establishing lasting peace rests on their heads. The days of communal bickering must be left behind, for the simple reason that this only weakens the position of religion itself. In the modern age all religions must stand together or be crushed together by materialism. Too long have we allowed true religion to be exploited by designing people for their own selfish ends. Great souls first felt the impulse for love, peace, charity, equality, and universal brotherhood. Later on, these became mere slogans in the hands of designing people, who reduced the universality of the saints and prophets into 'our fathers' religion', 'our national religion', 'our country's religion' and so on. And in the hands of the ignorant masses religion degenerated into fanaticism, mere protestation of faith and hatred of others, without any sincere effort for moral uplift and spiritual enlightenment. God's revelation of His love and glory through His prophets and incarnations thus becomes the worst weapon against God's own children.

To eschew this fanaticism, the world must be better educated and informed about the faiths all over the world. Historical research and comparative study can also separate the dross from the essential, and put us in a better frame of mind. The metaphysical presuppositions of sectarian doctrinaires have to be openly and critically examined; for true religion can very well stand such scrutiny. It will not do simply to refer to somebody's sayings or some ancient text, when the matter under discussion militates against the scientific facts of this life and offends against morality. The mythologies and ceremonial forms have also to be examined in the same way, without at the same time becoming a sort of scientific fanatic and running amuck against all real or supposed anomalies, irregularities and irrationalities. For we have to remember that each religion has its own natural appendages, without which the faith itself cannot survive. Under such circumstances we have to make concessions so long as such supposed irrationality is not fanatically directed against others. Have your unscientific mythologies, rituals and mysticism, if you feel that they really help you Godwards. But let others also have their own way, and do not shut for ever the light of reason from penetrating into the dark recesses of your mind.

While thus agreeing with science and reason up to the very limit of their possibilities, we cannot, however, forget that religion is after all an expression of the natural aspiration of man to reach God—a fact which no science or reason can deny, and which can be compromised under no circumstances. Looked at from this angle of vision, we are all at one, though our religions may bear different names, and even God may be called differently. If such an aspiration is true anywhere, it is true everywhere, so that all religions stand or fall together. The expressions of this aspiration may be evaluated differently, and some may be graded higher and some lower; still they are religions none the less, and they have their due scope relatively to the degree of development of the human minds concerned and the civilizations by which they are sustained. The religion of the less advanced tribes is as much religion as that of the more civilized communities; a child's faltering talk is also a form of human language.

We can tackle the problem of amity either in the wider fields of human dealings or in personal life, or both together. But it is better to work up from the bottom upward. A saint can give a new tone to a society, and an individual life lived ideally can do much more for the cause of universal brotherhood than talking loudly from the house-top. Law can prevent something wrong, but creation of a value depends on the human heart itself. Planned progress must follow sincere individual effort. 'Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the world,' said Swami Vivekananda. 'Help, if you can; if you cannot, fold your hands and stand and see. Secondly, take man where he stands, and from there give him a lift. Give up all ideas that you can make man spiritual. There is no other teacher to you than your own soul.'

Sri Ramakrishna exemplified all these ideas in a practical way in his own life. He represented a type which future generations would have to strive to emulate, if the world is to have real spirituality and real universal brotherhood. And this is a field where religious men alone can succeed. Let them proceed step by step as sincere religious men, and not be led by secular men who have their own ulterior motives.

Before closing, let me pray to God that the deliberations that will be held in this Parliament of Religions may help us implement into the life of the world the spirit of tolerance and acceptance of which Swami Vivekananda and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna were living embodiments. I wish you all success.

OPENING ADDRESS AND WELCOME

THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE P. B. MUKHARJI

President, Swami Vivekananda Centenary

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

On behalf of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Committee and on my behalf I extend to friends from all over the world and you all our heartiest welcome.

This occasion is historic. The great scholars, philosophers, educationists and exponents of different religions who have come from the four corners of the globe will be making new history. The occasion for this august assembly is the centenary of Swami Vivekananda.

The first Parliament of Religions was held at Chicago in the United States of America on the 11th September 1893. Swami Vivekananda was a chance Delegate to that Parliament. It was one of those chances that make history for men. That was the first Parliament of Religions in the world. He delivered his famous Chicago Address on the 19th September 1893 and again on the 27th September 1893. Between 1893 and 1963 the world has taken momentous steps.

The need for this Parliament of Religions which you are now attending is great to-day in this atomic age which poses the challenge of synthesis between power and wisdom, between knowledge and action. This is an age of paradox. No age had more knowledge than this and no age lived a more ignorant existence than this. No age had more power than this and no age was weaker than this. Our knowledge remains verbal and fails to transform life and living.

In his famous historic speech at Chicago Parliament of Religions, Swami Vivekananda proclaimed as follows:—

> "Sectarianism, bigotry and their horrible descendant,—fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair. But their time is come. I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this Parliament and Convention of Religions, may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or the pen and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.
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> To gain the infinite universal individuality, this miserable prison-individuality must go. Then alone can death cease when I am one

> with life. Then alone can misery cease when I am one with happiness itself. Then alone can all errors cease, when I am one with knowledge itself. This is the scientific conclusion. Science has proved to one that mere physical individuality is a delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing form in an unbroken ocean of Matter. Unity is therefore a necessary conclusion.
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> Science is nothing but the finding of unity. As soon as science would reach perfect unity, it would stop from further progress, because it would reach the goal. Thus chemistry could not progress farther when it would discover one element out of which all others could be made. Physics would stop when it would be able to fulfil its services in discovering one energy of which all the others are but manifestations, and the science of religion become perfect when it would discover Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, one who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus is it, through multiplicity and duality, the ultimate unity is reached. Religion can go no farther. This is the goal of all science."

What he said then was true. It is truer now.

Religions of the world are the great heritage of mankind. Their great scriptures, their great prophets, their great saints, their great philosophers, their great exponents, their great ideals of life and great examples of living, have from time to time reminded mankind of its true destiny. It is however said in this age that religion no longer rules the life of the modern man. In the same breath it is also said that all the religions have failed to make man sane, wise and civilised. There is a concealed fallacy in this line of reasoning. If religions do not rule our lives, then we are ruling our lives by some other principles which are responsible for the present state of affairs in the world. It is therefore illogical to blame the religions which we exclude from our lives. A part of this dialectics is the current thinking that religions in any event have failed us. The disagreeable answer that we have failed the religions does not appear popularly acceptable. But it is possible to cut through this vicious circle of controversy, whether religions have failed man or man has failed religions. It may be possible to accept that we have mutually failed each other. There is a communion between cause and effect, between means and ends, which is the missing link so far in human wisdom, painfully struggling to graduate from phrase to facts.

One attempt to get out of this vicious circle is recent. That is the application of some kind of semantic magic. That magic is supposed to consist in replacing the word religion, which is criticised to have become debased by sectarian and creedal narrowness, by the word spirituality or humanitarianism. If words can reform, convert and transmute human nature then this possibility must be explored, for the effect of language on philosophy and religion remains still an uncharted ocean. But mere words and change of names may not be enough for the very fundamental crisis with which this world is faced in the present age.

The dominant morality of the 19th century and this 20th century may be described as a kind of sentimental humanitarianism, whose sentiment was animated by a rising conscience and an unguided zeal to uplift the oppressed. It was marked by an aim which was collective, operated by methods which were economic and its panaceas were political. It floundered on the rock of the ignorance to recognise that to do good and be good are inseparable human experiences and one could not do the one without being the other. It has led to a widespread hypocrisy in the present age because it is only the hypocrite who can aspire to do good without being good. The poles of these two aims, to do good and to be good may appear wide apart, but they are inseparably joined by an inviolable axis. To reform the world and reform oneself are not contradictory but complementary. It only emphasises the simple irrevocable logic that one cannot be a humanitarian without being a humanist himself, a simple truth overclouded by the pressure of irrelevant considerations.

It is not religions alone that exhibit the marks of confusion in the modern age. Modern science is not free from this confusion. Bergson's theory of time, Freud's theory of the sub-conscious, Einstein's theory of space, time and energy and Heisenberg's principles of indeterminacy are only some examples of ambiguity, paradox, speculation and mythology in modern science. It is possible to find the source of all this confusion. It is possible to discover the septic focus. That discovery may help to cure the mad unmethodical rush for attending to this symptom or the other. Religion has been accused of developing mythologies, irrational and superstitious. But science has its mythologies too. The glittering mythology of matter which modern science is breeding prolifically, may put to shame all the mythologies of the religions of mankind, put together. The conflict between religion and science is not solved by the urbane philosophical platitude that if both profess to find the truth then there should be no disagreement between the two. The conflict is at the root of the present crisis and is on a deeper fundamental level. Science is making man dependent on things, goods and machines, and this dependence may be the prelude to the new slavery of this age, more emasculating than its previous brands in history. Religion claims to make man independent and self-reliant, and therefore means liberation. It is not a difference merely of methodology but of ideology. The religion of this age will have to establish that man is the master and not the slave of science. The scientist is always greater than his science, the creator greater than his creation. Science is not the scientist. It is the function of religion to rediscover that scientist who knows the science of life, its statics and dynamics and be one with Him› Religion is this realisation.

Countries, nations, races, societies and individuals are at different stages of evolution. Within the framework of certain universal features applicable to all there are many differences and varieties. America to-day is a kind of Old World of the machine age, less and less convinced of the possibilities of salvation by material abundance alone, showing strains of being bored with gadgets and tending more and more to be concerned with the preservation of human values. On the other hand, Europe and more so Asia and Africa are the New World of the mass society, the exuberant frontier of machine, mechanics, politics and economics, hungry for consumption, not always inoculated against the diseases of mechanisation, still too inexperienced and young enough to believe that technology, production and acquisition of enough goods may not bring the solution.

Modern man's organic relation to a natural environment has alarmingly diminished with strange results physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually, morally and spiritually. Specialisation, sophistication and expansion in social structure are fast making him a closed island, an isolated figure, a mere footnote on the page of life. This alienation of man from his environment is aggravated by his alienation from himself. When we discuss revitalisation of society, the present infatuation seems to be a race for finding new ideas. Normally, though not always, there is no famine of new ideas. The problem is to get a hearing for them. The ageing society or the traditional community develops elaborate defences against new ideas and new practices. Habitual modes of solving problems, having served their days, block the future growth. Habit becomes the second nature and we forget that nature was the first habit. Toynbee argues that society needs a challenge. But challenge is always there. The strange phenomenon of human history is that the challenge is not accepted or noticed. Challenge to produce its effect needs the co-operation between the trinity of the challenger, the challenge and the challenged. It is that dynamics that our present fermentation misses. If the human mind is an iceberg, nine-tenths of which always remain submerged, the one-tenth which is visible appears to be perverted. Truth travels slowly; but it always reaches in time. Truth is neither fast nor slow. The present age is very fond of experiments. It also wants to experiment with life and truth. But experiment is never enough nor a safe doorway to truth unless the discipline and condition of its execution are observed. We have not the patience to observe that discipline. The result at best is that experiments are only showing our errors, one after another. Discovery of errors, does not necessarily lead to the discovery of truth. We cannot only experiment with truth. We have to learn to experience it.

Man in his composition remains individual. He is not a stereotyped product. No man is a copy of another. Each individual is an original creation. He is the exemplar of individuality. No State or social system can enter and invade this essentially inner circle of his personality though it may qualify it. It is this inner circle which remains submerged. The salvation of the State or society depends on the salvation of the individual man and no system, however beneficent in intention, can justify itself, which crushes freedom of the mind and conscience of the individual. Modern world is perhaps too proud with its new command over nature to listen to forces other than those of science, technology and commerce which give it that command. All the cherished and ancient beliefs in the mental and spiritual advantages of enforced education after a century of fanfare and propaganda have produced a level of intelligence that enables a majority to enjoy the products of pleasure and comfort while a minority discovers the technological gadgets how to blow the world to bits. One therefore beholds the strange spectacle of exhausted volcanoes where not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest.

A strange race of experts has made the pictures confused. If you believe the doctors, nothing to-day is wholesome. If you believe the theologians, nothing to-day is innocent. If you believe the soldiers, nothing is safe. If you believe the lawyers, then nothing is lawful. If you believe the business man, then the world is only a market place for selling goods and creating wants. Institutions are what they do and not what they say they do. It is the verb that matters and not the noun. It is, therefore, often said that our political, social and economic performances are an affront to our intelligence and an offence to our dignity as human beings. It is not things but significance of things that matters. This problem is waiting on the agenda of the world history for a solution and has now become urgent. The great pageant of life demands an answer.

It is not possible to give a readymade philosophy to an individual. Philosophy is not a utility article to be purchased at a shop or presented by one to another as a birthday gift. It is a plant of slow growth, which draws nourishment from the soil of personal thought and experience. The great aim of living is to harmonise with the order of things, and when the cavalcade passes swiftly, which it does in the present age, that harmony is a perpetual challenge. The mental furniture of the modern man appears to be overwhelmed by a sense of lost glories and imminent peril.

It is necessary to choose an idea and then serve it undisturbed by world's alarms and excursions. To break entirely with tradition is usually to achieve a still-born birth. It is best to be near the well-springs of life, so that one does not run the risk of perpetually drying up. Detached, ready to revise, never insisting to convert, no crusaders or the friend of crusaders, is not the type of faith of this generation. Our trusts are superficial and temporary and our distrusts universal. We are more in love with novelties rather than loyalties, creeds, institutions and propaganda. But the one thing which we will not trust is the vigilant mind and the self-directed soul. It is not necessary to be a propagandist of one's own way of life. But it is imperative and essential to be quiet and included in this age of violence. We are too apt to adopt a philosophy of fragmentation. In this atomic age we feel atomised. We have lost all sense of belonging to the whole, of being a conscious participant in the affairs and patterns of an ordered integer.

Philosophy is no longer a lesson to be learnt as by forces of habits it had become, in this scholastic decadence, but is a personal meditation which any one is invited to begin again on his own account. The universe is full of men going through the same motions in the same surroundings, but carrying within themselves and projecting around them, universes as mutually removed as the constellations. We prefer to cut off our connections with the continents and become islands, and then want to conquer space. The more we probe into space and the firmaments, the less it appears we seem to know our nearest neighbour in the adjoining house. The need to-day is not so much as to put man into space but to put a little more space into man. To do that we have to have the patience that knows how to wait for good work to come to maturity. We are passing through an epoch of social aimlessness. The true vocation of a man is both to be centred within himself and expansive around. Expansion of personality implies as an interior condition, a renunciation of the self and of its goods which depolarises ego-centricity. For that purpose formal asceticism and fixed economic categories are both wrong attitudes and principles. Interiorisation and exteriorisation are both essential conditions for the balanced and real growth of man. Man only works well when he is working with the whole of himself and not with his parts which we are doing in modern civilisation.

The pressure of nature upon us and the labours by which we respond to it, are not merely factors making for productivity. They are also forces disruptive of ego-centricity and for that reason they are cultural and spiritual forces quite as important as power and riches, and doubtless more so. Spiritual life is a struggle of expression of the spirit against the inertia of matter. The free man of religion is the man to whom the whole world puts questions and who responds accordingly; he is the type of responsible man. The superficial life asks for nothing better, specially in the face of danger, than adaptation at the cheapest price, and is very willing to strike a bargain, but the inner life is always risking and spending without counting the cost. One may speak of the vocation of an epoch or a nation; or honour as medieval value, or liberty or social justice as modern values; or in terms of space rather than time—compassion as an Indian value, grace a French value, community a Russian value, charity a British value, generosity an American value. Religion is one. Religious ways are many, and religious disciplines can be as manifold as men. But they all lead to the same Spiritual Capital.

All experience is born of some conflict or other. To renounce conflict at all costs is to depart from the principal conditions. The task is one of, how to regulate that conflict. We have no authentic existence. We have an interior stronghold of values against which even the fear of death itself cannot prevail. To desire life at all costs is, some say, to buy life at the price of all reason for living. A man, as a general rule, has to be rescued from physiological and social misery before he can attend to the higher values and the pharisaism that chides him for neglect of such values without giving him the most elementary means for their cultivation stands condemned. The knowing spirit is not a neutral mirror, nor is it a factory of concepts. In a universe, truth is always something appropriated, not simply by rational technique, but by conversion which is a condition prior to elimination. That is why suffering may be easily compensated from the deeper reserves of humanity that it sometimes unlocks. But this is only possible if man does not become a spiritual deserter. To make a virtue of failure and futility and to forsake the modesties of real responsibility for obscure aspirations towards martyrdom is a sign of devitalisation and not of spirituality. The prophets in their isolation are turning into vain imprecation while the tacticians are becoming entangled in their own manoeuvres. It is wrong to think emotional paroxysm to be a substitute for a living faith. A sense of the great continuities of life forbids our acceptance of the myth of revolution. The primacy of economics marks a historic disorder from which we have to extricate ourselves. Culture is what remains when one no longer knows anything. It is what the man himself has become. Civilisation is not committing one's labour to paper and prosperity but in living a life. There is a kind of spiritual torment which makes the past an illusion and the future a desolation. We are very near that torment in the modern age.

All philosophy teaches that man cannot be regarded as a utility and a commodity, as a means of production to be bought and sold, as units of population to be restricted or expanded. The world has yet to learn to treat man as an end in himself. At the same time it is vain to suggest that providence justifies every event, legitimises every success, sanctions the theory that whatever is, is always right. Philosophy therefore, does not seek a policy but a knowledge and an understanding. That is the true function of religion.

Hence the danger both for philosophy and religion is to run into institutionalism, sectarianism and formalism. Institutions, sects, creeds and forms have had a long day. Intended to be temporary disciplines they became permanent ends in themselves. Discipline loses its force and life when it becomes mechanical or is crystallised. It then loses its real power and tries to continue by a false power. It is said that power is ethically neutral and its potentialities for good are just as great for evil. It is said that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is here that the need for wisdom arises in the present age. While conscience itself is the metaphysical spring for liberty, the conflict of consciences is its empirical security.

Man's greatest calamity is to be at variance with himself. It is wrong to think that science has increased that calamity. True science is a reduction of multiplicities to identities. Ethics is not a function of social utility but the true forces of gravitation that binds and holds every civilisation together. We are busy taking intellectual precautions while the problem is being won in other spheres. To make remote things near, common things extensively useful, and useful things common, is philosophy. If we can keep that in view and live accordingly, then we may succeed in avoiding the breakdown of our civilisation, war in home, war in industry and a war between nations. It is not intelligence which can give us the strength to live according to the order of things. Intelligence is content to point out the road but never drives it. Intellectuals are incapable of running on the track although they see the goal clearly.

It is not only the tyrants who enslave men. We see new tyrannies in the horizon of to-day. Property, money and things can become implacable foes and thieves of freedom. Freedom is far better with a simple and spare life than with luxury. We men of the modern age cannot afford any more to remain content by exploiting our taste for goods and distaste for values. The great religions which give us their heritage wanted to build men. It takes more wisdom and more science to build a new heart and a new man than to invent a new radio or a new gadget. To preserve faith in an age of faithlessness is an act of consecration, needed to resurrect life from its present grave of purposelessness which it has entered in the modern age. Those who succeed in doing so never find their world a waste land strewn with the broken images and withered stumps of time. The simple faith emphasises that no institution can be better than the institutor. The scale of the machine and the magnitude of its production are never an atonement for the exploitation of man.

Time consumes space. Acceleration of time therefore must proceed by increased reduction of space. Yet, time in its turn contracts. There is the reverse process when space consumes time and time changes to space. That is the achievement of eternity and the state of endless present. Man is an amphibian who lives simultaneously in two worlds, the home-made world of matter and the world of spirit. Therefore, when there is a confusion in the world, psychologically and in every way, we enclose ourselves in some kind of security, either that of a bank account or that of an ideology. When we look to a system for the transformation of a society, we are merely evading the question because a system cannot transform man. Man always transforms a system. The fundamental factor of self-deception is the constant desire to be something in this world and in the world hereafter. Having fruitlessly exploited men and things in the past centuries, we have now begun the new one with exploiting ideas. This is the age of exploitation of ideas. When the mind is crowded with the known, there is no space in it to receive the unknown. We, therefore, see the extraordinary perversion to-day that we think we shall understand if we have more information, more books and more printed matter. We do not realise that the best books are those that tell us what we know already.

The emphasis on inner life has therefore to be re-established, for the very practical reason to bring order in the outer life. The principle of the one who experiences the inner life is to become all things to all men throughout his life. In every situation, in every capacity he answers the demand of the moment. For him there is no occupation in life which is too difficult. One who has realised the inner life is therefore a mystery to everyone else. No one can fathom his depth. He promises sincerity, he commands trust, he spreads goodness and gives the impression of God and truth and spreads it everywhere. His every act is a meditation and a worship. He may know things and yet may not speak, for if a man in his inner life were to speak all his experience it would confuse many minds. The inner life is seeing all things and yet not seeing them, feeling all things and not expressing them, for they cannot be fully expressed; understanding of things and not explaining them; this is the man of the Vedanta of India. In order to attain a spiritual knowledge, one does not need to learn much, because he has to know what he already knows, only he has to discover it himself. Our salvation lies not in keeping with the times but in transcending them. We do not see the spiritual daylight of God's presence all around us. We only see the candle lights of our own desire and judgment. Our anxiety always to produce some visible result to justify our existence is a source of constant embarrassment both to ourselves and to the environment to which we belong. Without inner richness, worldly things become extravagantly important. That is what is happening to-day. When we are inwardly poor, we indulge in every form of outward show in wealth, power and possession. When our hearts are empty, we collect things. In the brief tenancy on earth man ego-centrically orders events in his mind, and the sense of becoming overwhelms the sense of being. There is an intolerance in the modern age. Consequently a great irreverence is growing. Reverence is the deeply religious feeling not to slight others, it is the utmost sincerity in the heart which is free from the master illusion that we can be free when we have turned others to cinders in their beds or rubbed the salt of re-proof into the wounds of someone else's errors.

A fundamental problem of religion to-day is the lack of appreciation that life is one integral and an indivisible whole which has neither an outside nor an inside. Our nature is one with the objective nature, not in the mathematical sense but in the sense that nature lives in us and we live in nature. This inter-penetration and expansion educate us to respect life, not to violate it or utilise it for selfish aims. This, perhaps, also is the reason why reverence is disappearing from the values of life. From the very beginning nothing has been withheld from us. Only the folly and impertinence of our ego have made us unable to see what we have been from the outset and what we really are. Our ego has been satisfied with all second-hand elaborations, the rationalisations of other men's experience. The need of the hour is for direct experience without any interfering mediums. Our individual surface is not our real frontier. It merely sets up between us and the cosmic universe a water-mark apparently indispensable to our limited action and behaviour. In other words, there is always a great deal of unexpressed reference. There cannot be a text without a context. The human text is wearing out because it is forgetting its context. Religion and philosophy provide that context. Science accentuates the text. One can only learn how one ought to live by actual living. That means our goal is to discover that we have always been what we ought to be. This cannot be achieved by words. Not before time has lost its hold, and space its predominance, does man come into his own. The mind is primarily concerned not with measures and locations but with being and meaning. To see ourselves as others see us is a most salutary gift. Hardly less important is the capacity to see others as they see themselves. A too sanguine generation that expects heaven on earth as a result of a universal conversion to scientific and technological method may have to face another shock before it comes on its own.

A man cannot be crooked and think straight. By the nature of personality it cannot be otherwise. A philosophy, a passion and a plan are necessary to make a man or a nation great. Leave one weak spot in the dyke and the whole land will be flooded. We have lost greatly the sense of the priorities in life. Irrelevance and trivialities to-day submerge the essence and true appreciation of human life. It is an old trick of human nature to be concerned with what we cannot do so that we may avoid doing the things we can.

The false ideas we hold of ourselves compel us to hold false ideas of the world around us. We need a greater Copernicus to-day to deliver us from the sense-bound cosmology. Pre-Copernicans thought that the planet earth occupied the centre of the universe. Modern scientific world makes the greater mistake to-day by supposing that the material cosmos is the centre of the whole of the universe.

Scientist's concern with facts is liable to be overdone. Facts are not predetermined phenomena. Facts are not inviolable and cannot be the foundation of truth and ultimate knowledge. Faith creates facts. Faith can change and mould any fact. Facts are always changing. Faith is constant. Constant faith and changing facts represent the moving cycle of adjustment. It is that faith which religion and philosophy aspire and succeed to understand. This faith is the foundation of this universe and the spirit of all matter, and the creator of all facts. True religion and true philosophy help to understand that faith. What is that faith, faith in what, its origin, its manifestations, its applications and how it controls the panorama of this world in mind, time and space will no doubt be the subject of your wise consideration and thoughtful deliberations at this Conference. It so happens that in the modern age of faithlessness, it is blasphemy to talk about faith, but then it has always the strength to suffer the Cross and bring the Resurrection.

These are some of the pressing questions of our age. In this Parliament of Religions, let the world have from you some answers, however tentative, to these great interrogations. Religion is truly multi-dimensional and to be effective has to pervade the myriad manifestations of life, in economics, politics, sociology, the physical and mental sciences, in home, business, commerce, profession and the humblest activity of our daily life. Neither religion nor philosophy can afford to remain in any intellectual or emotional isolation. Let it not be said that along with the rest of the world, religion and philosophy have become invalid. In welcoming you here I shall express the hope that you will help to build the bridge between religion, philosophy, science and life, and show the way to their grand integration to realise the true destiny of the human race. Let us have a pre-view of a new world that can take over, a world of which you and I have dreamt.

I shall conclude with the eternal message of the Vedas and the Upanishads of India which still speaks to us across thousands of years, raising the fundamental question and giving the famous answer:

"*Kasmai devaya havisha vidhema*"
"*—Which God shall we worship ?*"

The answer was—

"*Ya Atmada Balada Yasya Vishva*
Upasate Prashisham Yasya Devah."

—"Giver of vital breath, of power and vigour, He Whose commandments all the gods acknowledge."

Again their prayer is—

"*Asato Ma Sadgamaya Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya Mrityorma Amritam gamaya.*"

—"Lead us from the ephemeral to the eternal, from darkness to light, from death to immortality."

Finally they appeal and address to the humanity in these terms:—

"*Shrinvantu Vishve Amritasya Putrah*
A Ye Dhamani Divyani Tasthu
Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam
Adityavarnam Tamasah Parastat
Tameva Viditva Atimrityumeti,
Nanyah Pantha Vidyate Ayanaya."

—"Harken Ye, Children of immortality,
There is One deathless, of eternal light, more
effulgent than the Sun, beyond the
reach of all darkness, knowing
Whom one conquers death,
There is no other way."

On that way, let us advance from mortality to immortality, from darkness to light.

MESSAGES

Messages wishing success of the Parliament of Religions conveyed by distinguished persons who could not attend the Parliament personally:

Dr. Radhakrishnan,
President of India:

I send my greetings and goodwishes to the delegates and other participants in the Parliament of Religions which is meeting in Calcutta. It is fitting that an assembly of this kind should mark the Centenary of the Birth of a great personality who carried a message from the East to another Parliament of Religions which met in Chicago seventy years ago. The great Swami Vivekananda embodied in his personal life and preaching all that was best in the religion and culture of the land of his birth. He had cut through the layers of superstition, prejudice and ignorance which had gathered round Hinduism and shown up the truth of this ancient religion in its pristine glory and purity. The true essence of all religions is the same. Outward symbols and ceremonies have their limited use only if they assist man in realising the ultimate and eternal truth which guides and inspires all true religions. While Vivekananda made the culture and religion of the East better known to the West his appeal was essentially to his own countrymen to get rid of the rigid dogmas and meaningless ceremonies and to devote themselves to real and fruitful worship by service to the poor and the lowly. I hope, the Parliament which is meeting in Calcutta will promote a better understanding of the distinctive cultures, religions and ways of life in different parts of the world and thereby contribute towards the evolution of one world of friendship and understanding.

His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore:

I have great pleasure in sending this message to the Parliament of Religions to be held at Calcutta during Swami Vivekananda Centenary celebrations. Swami Vivekananda was one of our greatest spiritual leaders and his teachings are a perennial source of inspiration to us. I wish the Parliament of Religions every success.

Shri C. Subramaniam, Minister of Food and Agriculture, New Delhi:

I am glad to hear that a Parliament of Religions is to be held in Calcutta as part of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary celebrations. I am sure that the deliberations will underline the human race's basic unity in diversity.

Shri H. C. Dasappa, Minister of Railways, New Delhi:

Swami Vivekananda was in many ways a soldier-Saint. He energised and awakened our people from their slumber and inertia. It was he who carried the essence of our religious teaching to the West at the turn of the Century. The result is that there has been increasing recognition abroad of the finer points of Hinduism, a greater understanding between peoples of the East and West and a broadening of outlook all round. The present occasion when delegates from all parts of the world will be meeting and exchanging ideas is bound to give a fresh impetus to this process of a wider understanding between man and man, irrespective of his country or his personal religion.

Shri S. K. Dey, Minister of Community Development, Panchayati-Raj & Cooperation, New Delhi:

I have never had the opportunity of meeting Swami Vivekananda. But he has had a grip over me ever since I was ten. Try however hard I may, I cannot shake his image off even in my weakest moments.

A very brief biography of Swamiji came in my hand when I was ten and a student of Class IV at Sylhet. I walked six miles back from the school to my home in the village crossing two flooded rivers *en route* by ferry. I was oblivious of the world about me till I reached home at the end of the day and got down to the village pond to do the customary washing of feet. The book was still in my hand. I could not sit down to eat until I had come to the last page.

The young Swami radiated fire through his face. His words acted like shots of dynamite. These blasted me into pieces. The old personality died for ever. The new one was to emerge. I have never ceased to be in quest ever since. It is Swami Vivekananda who taught me "Every soul is potentially divine." It is he who taught "One should talk through deeds rather than words." It is Swamiji who commanded a foundry to be built to cast man.

* * *

Never, never has there been a purer, a more powerful personality, a living fire symbolising the passion and will of the people of India, a world citizen at the same time. The Centenary of this great son of India is but a reminder. The consummation of his dream is yet to come. It is in the process.

Shri H. V. Pataskar, Governor, Madhya Pradesh:

I am glad to learn that the Parliament of Religions will be held from the 29th December, 1963 to 5th January, 1964 as part of the Centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji was a great saint, teacher, philosopher and above all a great patriot. The country will be ever grateful to him for properly interpreting Hindu Philosophy and Culture to the world. His great advocacy of our Philosophy and Religion at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago had the effect of drawing the attention of the whole world to India and her great civilisation. On the occasion of Swamiji's Birth Centenary, I offer my humble tribute to the great soul and wish the celebrations all success.

Shri K. M. Munshi, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay:

I am glad that the Parliament of Religions is meeting in Calcutta as "Bharat-Vakya" of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary celebrations.

The Parliament of Religions to be really effective has to realise that whatever the difference in institutional structure and dogmas, the fundamentals of all religions are one, in recognising the supremacy of the Moral Order and in leading man to realise his unity with God.

Truly has it been said by the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita that whatever the forms in which men worship Him, it is only His grace that brings the devotee to Him.

Even with the realisation of this truth, the duty of the Parliament does not end. Religion cannot merely rest on intellectual conviction or aspiration for personal good. The devotion to God, to be real, must be translated into action in individual life and through the spiritual energy so radiated, transform the individual and the society.

I wish the Parliament of Religions success in its deliberations.

Shri S. N. Sinha, Minister of Information & Broadcasting, New Delhi:

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the holding of the Parliament of Religions in connection with the Centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest Yogis India has produced in modern times. We are all proud of him.

His contribution to world religions in general and to Hinduism in particular has been tremendous. By stressing the underlying unity of all religions, he has rendered a yeoman's service to the cause of tolerance and mutual understanding in the world. His catholic approach to religions, true to the teachings of Hinduism, greatly impressed the world religious leaders and sparked off an unusual interest in Hinduism amongst the Westerners. This has been beneficial both to India and the West. While it enabled Hinduism to get rid of its outmoded and useless rituals and ceremonies, the West started having a truer and better picture of this religion.

Today, despite shortened distances and multiplied contacts, the idea of a world society based on religious and racial tolerance is as elusive an object as before. If this Parliament can once again focus people's attention on the message of Swami Vivekenanda, it would have achieved its purpose.

Sm. Sucheta Kripalani, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh:

Swami Vivekananda is one of the founding fathers of Indian nationhood. His sayings and writings infused in the youth of the day pride of heritage and vision of future destiny and aroused in them a deep passion for freedom. The world-wide acclaim that greeted Swamiji's expositions of Indian philosophy brought out yearnings for freedom into the ambit of possibility to the minds that had long been paralysed in the despair and political slavery and cultural obscurantism.

The Parliament of Religions being the actual venue of Swamiji's 'Digvijaya' it is only appropriate that it be accorded the primacy in celebrations you have done.

One of the three that revealed the lofty beauties of Indian thought and culture to the world—the other two being Swami Dayananda and Swami Ram Tirtha—his Centenary calls forth for a rededication of our energies and resources to the mission of building up India into a pillar of support and shelter of solace to the humanity threatened with destruction brought about by its own unprincipled pursuit of power and pleasure. Swami Vivekananda himself enunciated a philosophy of power and pleasure for the benefit of the disheartened and beaten Indians but that was of the power of the spirit and of the pleasure of self-realisation in the service and comfort of humanity. Perhaps this message may yet save the world from otherwise inevitable annihilation.

I wish the Centenary celebrations and the Parliament of Religions all success.

Mr. Masakiyo Miyamoto, Chairman, Committee of Centenary of Swami Vivekananda, Japan:

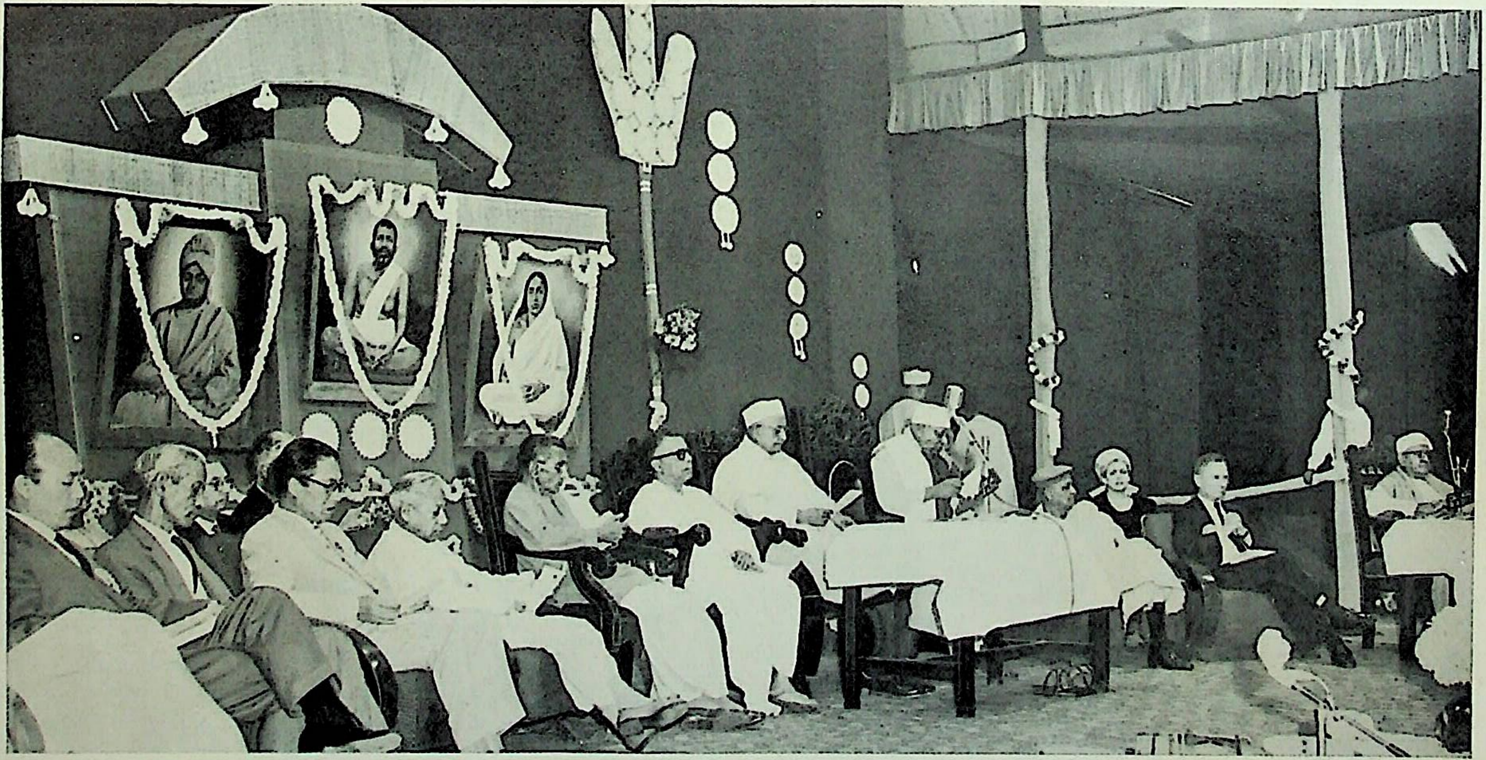
It was more than fourteen centuries ago that the great Indian spirit came to knock at the door of spiritual Japan. This messenger did not come to leave there a simple mission. He established himself among us forever. Buddhism brought to us with its spiritual light supreme salvation, the Indian philosophy, which nourished and enriched our thinking and feeling.

But since the last century, another heterogeneous civilisation came into Japan. It was the Western civilisation, more striking because of its great power and influence which dazzled us by all kinds of pleasures of life.

It must be, therefore, very significant to see in Japan a revival of the great Indian spirit, this time called *Ramakrishna-Vivekananda*, to strengthen the everlasting fire covered in ashes of time.

It is true that this divine voice did not resound at first so well in the midst of noises of machines. But the small still voice cannot be completely drowned, because it is the Voice of God-man itself, unique and universal, that cannot die.

We hope that we can be modest sowers of sacred seeds, as we organise a series of lectures in different universities in Japan, in memory of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda.



Inauguration of the Parliament of Religions, 1963-64, on the occasion of the Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary, Calcutta.

CHAPTER II

THE BUDDHA, ŚRĪ ŚAṄKARĀCĀRYA, AND SWĀMĪ VIVEKĀNANDA

SWAMI SATPRAKASHANANDA
St. Louis, U. S. A.

1. How the three great spiritual leaders are related.

The Buddha, Śaṅkara, and Vivekānanda stand out as three great revivalists in the religious history of India. Each has brought about significant changes in the religious life and thought of the country. Each has made a distinct contribution to world-culture. Each has delivered a message of universal significance and can be entitled a teacher of humanity. Like Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda the Buddha realized the Supreme Being (Brahman) in nirvikalpa samādhi, though he did not declare Godhead or God.[1] This is the acme of spiritual experience, the immediate apprehension of the ultimate Reality as Pure Consciousness undivided and undiversified. In Buddhism it is called "bodhi (enlightenment or illumination)." Usually it is termed "nirvāṇa." Buddhist nirvāṇa is in fact Brahma-nirvāṇa[2] mentioned in the Bhagavad-gītā[3]. It does not mean annihilation, but the attainment of full freedom and beatitude consequent on the realization of oneness with Brahman. All the three leaders lived as free souls working incessantly for the guidance and upliftment of mankind.

While Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda were avowed Advaitists, the Buddha was an Advaitist at heart.[4] His non-committal attitude with regard to the ultimate Reality implies its inexpressibility rather than its negation. According to the Upaniṣadic tradition silence is the final answer to all enquiries as to the nature of Nondual Brahman beyond the range of word and thought (avāṅmanasogocaram).

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[1] As regards the Buddha's experience of nirvāṇa, Dr. Law remarks: "According to the Buddha's claim, this is the ninth stage of *samādhi*, reached for the first time by him. This is a state of trance when outwardly a man who reaches it is as good as dead, there being nothing but warmth (uṣma) as a sign of life. In this state, a level of consciousness (citta) is reached where consciousness is ultimately thrown back on itself, completely void, being devoid of subject-object relation (grāhya-grāhaka-bhāva-rahita)." The article on "Nirvāṇa" by Bimala Churn Law, Ph.D., D.Litt., in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, 1958.

[2] In *Itivuttaka* (one of the fifteen divisions of *Khuddaka-Nikāya* of Sutta-Piṭaka) a Buddha or an Arhat is often spoken of as "Brahma-bhūta—one who has become Brahman." The expression "Brahma-prāpti" (attainment of Brahman) has also been used. Buddhist commentators, however, interpret these expressions in the sense of "most excellent", "attainment of the highest state".

[3] Says Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "The yōgī who finds happiness within, rejoices within, and is illumined within attains freedom in Brahman becoming one with Brahman. The sages whose wrong tendencies are eliminated, whose doubts are dispelled, and the senses controlled, and who devote themselves to the welfare of all beings, attain freedom in Brahman. The men of renunciation who are free from attachment and aversion, whose minds are disciplined, who have realized the Self, become one with Brahman here and hereafter." (V: 24-26).

[4] The great lexicographer and poet, Amara-siṁha (circ. 6th century A.D.), calls the Buddha "Advayavādi" in his lexicon, *Amara-kōṣa*: "Sarvajñah Sugatah Buddhah . . . . Advayavādī Vināyakah."

The teachings of the Buddha, like those of Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda, have the Upaniṣads as their source. But while Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda accepted the Upaniṣads as the authoritative source of suprasensuous knowledge and acknowledged their allegiance to them, the Buddha did not. As a result, his religion became completely separated from the Vedic religion (later known as Brāhmaṇism and Hinduism).

All the three were itinerant monastic teachers and formed new monastic organizations on the basis of the old. The monastic tradition is as old in India as the institution of marriage. From the earliest days the monks used to live individually and wander from place to place. It was the genius of the Buddha to organize the individual monks into a community or order under a set of common rules and regulations. Henceforth the monastic organization came into being and monasteries were founded for the dwelling of the monks. The Buddha also instituted an order of nuns. Before him rarely were there individual nuns.

Śaṅkara belonged to the time-honored Vedic line of sannyāsins, which had continued from time immemorial through a succession of teachers and disciples. He organized the ancient monastic body prevailing in his day under ten main heads. His monastic order is altogether separate from the Buddhist, although in establishing it he might have been influenced by the Buddhist idea of monastic organization. He restored the Vedic religion after its decline during the rise of Buddhism. The monastic institution formed by Swamī Vivekānanda in the modern age and named the Ramakrishna Order after his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, is allied with Śaṅkara's Vedāntic order of sannyāsins and is virtually an off-shoot of the same. It was initiated by Sri Ramakrishna, who was a sannyāsī disciple of Totā Purī, an illumined teacher of the Advaita school of Śaṅkarācārya.

The Buddha was born near Kapilavāstu[5] in Nepal in the foothills of the Himālayas in 623 B.C.,[6] and lived eighty years. Śaṅkara was born at Kalady in Kerala State in southwest India in 686 A.D.[7] and lived only thirty-two years. Vivekānanda was born in the modern city of Calcutta in Bengal in 1863 A.D. and lived but thirty-nine years. Thus, between the Buddha and Vivekānanda there is a distance of about 2400 years and Śaṅkara stands almost mid-way between them. The Buddha's message points to ethical idealism, Śaṅkara's to spiritual idealism, and Vivekānanda's to the conjoined practice of the two in all spheres of life. By instituting the service of man as the worship of God Swamī Vivekānanda has combined the love of man with the love of God, in other words, the ethical ideal with the spiritual ideal.

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[5] About 100 miles northeast of Vārāṇasī (Banaras). A stone pillar erected there 375 years later by Emperor Aśōka has this inscription: "Twenty years after his coronation, King Priyadarśī, Beloved of the Gods, visited this place in person and worshipped here because the Buddha, the sage of the Śākyas, was born here. He ordered a stone wall to be constructed around the place and erected this stone pillar to commemorate his visit." *The Edicts of Aśōka*, p. 69, ed., tr. by N. A. Nikam and Richard McKeon, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1959.

[6] According to the Therāvāda Buddhism. See the article of C. V. Joshi (Retired Professor of Pāli, Baroda University) on the Buddha's "Life and Teachings" and also Dr. Radhakrishnan's "Foreword" in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, The Publications Division, Government of India, 1959.

2. The teachings of the Buddha.

The basic teachings of the Buddha are the four noble truths, e.g.,:

(1) There is suffering in life.
(2) There is the cause of suffering.
(3) There is the cessation of suffering.
(4) There is the way to the cessation of suffering. All sufferings cease when their root-cause, ignorance, is eradicated by nirvāṇa, that is, by the attainment of perfect Knowledge (bodhi). Negatively, nirvāṇa is the extinguishing of all flames of desire (tanhā) with their roots, and, positively, it is the attainment of illumination attended with peace and bliss and love for all beings.[8] The way to nirvāṇa is the Noble Eightfold Path (aṣṭāṅgika-mārga). It is also called the Middle Path (madhya panthā), being characterized by the avoidance of the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. It is open to the lay disciples as well as the monks.

The following are the eight stages of the path:

(1) Right view (samyak dṛṣti)
(2) Right resolution (samyak saṁkalpa)
(3) Right speech (samyak vāk)
(4) Right conduct (samyak kriyā)
(5) Right means of livelihood (samyak ājīva)
(6) Right effort (samyak vyāyāma)
(7) Right mindfulness (samyak smṛti)
(8) Right concentration (samyak samādhi)

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[7] See Rajendranath Ghose's Preface to the *Works of Śaṅkarācārya*, Pt. I (Bengali edition), Calcutta, 1927. In the opinion of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar Śaṅkara was born in 680 A.D., if not earlier. See S. Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 447. Some modern scholars consider 788 A.D. as the year of Śaṅkara's birth.

[8] The Buddha's disciple and personal attendant, Ānanda, speaks of nirvāṇa both in its negative and positive aspects: "This is a state of consciousness indicated by the Lord who knows and sees, the Arhat all-enlightened, whereby an almsman who lives the strenuous life purged of self both finds Deliverance from his prisoned heart, and sees the extirpation of the Cankers hitherto rampant, and wins at last that utter peace which was not his before." ("The Portals of Nirvāṇa," *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol. V, Pt. 4, from *Aṅguttara Nikāya, Sutta-Piṭaka)*.

The Buddha combines in this Eightfold Path sound reasoning, ethical conduct, meditation and enlightenment.

A distinctive mark of the Buddha's message is the emphasis laid on complete self-abnegation and loving compassion for all living beings. And he himself was a personification of both.

3. The Buddha's ethical teachings have a metaphysical foundation underneath.

In one respect the Buddha's religion differs from all other religions of the world. While other religions rest on the recognition of some suprasensuous reality or realities, such as God, man's immortal self, heaven, hell, Buddhism as taught by the Buddha does not. The Buddha did not acknowledge any scriptural authority for the knowledge of the unseen. He depended solely on perception and inference. He took a practical view of things. He wanted men and women to accept what was evident and indubitable instead of enquiring after what was dubious and with regard to which no decisive answer could be expected. He laid stress on two important points: (1) the right understanding of the problem of suffering, and (2) the right way of living to get out of all sufferings. To him metaphysical speculation counted little, so far as the right living was concerned.

Though the Buddha does not deny or affirm metaphysical truths, they are implicit in his teachings. Even his own words corroborate this: "There is an unborn, an unoriginated, an unmade, an uncompounded; were there not, O mendicants, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the made and the compounded."[9]

4. Buddhism is a variant of Hinduism.

Though the Buddha did not acknowledge the authority of the Vedic testimony he accepted the basic teachings of the Upaniṣads but presented them in a new form to suit the socio-religious conditions and the psychological atmosphere of his age. He did not found a new religion, but invented a novel garb for the old religious ideas. It is evident from his own words as well: "I have seen the ancient way, the Old Road that was taken by the formerly all-awakened, and that is the path I follow."[10]

The Buddha had his own reasons for not declaring the Upaniṣadic Brahman, but he made the Upaniṣadic doctrine of karma and reincarnation and the liberation from the wheel of birth and rebirth the corner-stone of his religion. He adapted to his scheme of life the ethical principles of the Upaniṣads, and took up their ideal of renunciation. His doctrine of the "middle path" is quite in accord with the Upaniṣadic teaching of self-discipline (tapas). Self-torture is against the spirit of the Vedic religion. The Bhagavad-gītā emphatically condemns it and enjoins moderate living.[11]

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[9] Udāna VIII. 3. (Sutta-Piṭaka).

[10] Saṁyutta-Nikāya II. 16 (Sutta-Piṭaka).

Buddhism in common with other religio-philosophical systems of India has taken into account the existence of human sufferings and shown the way of complete deliverance from them. The Buddha was a Hindu reformer. "He also, like Jesus, came to fulfil and not to destroy," says Swāmī Vivekānanda. He was opposed to dogmatism prevalent at the time. This may be the reason why he did not acknowledge the authority of the Vedas and instead established his religion on perception and inference. But in so doing he cut off his religion from the ancient moorings. Though the reliance on authority does not necessarily mean the rejection of reason, yet, it is likely that the followers of the Vedic religion of his time were led primarily by dogmatic faith. As a monk, the Buddha was particularly interested in the Jñāna-Kāṇḍa (knowledge-section) of the Vedas. He did not care for the Karma-Kāṇḍa (work-section), and even condemned the sacrificial rites, which were meant for the fulfilment of men's sense-desires here and hereafter. He laid special emphasis on ethical conduct and did not care for rites and ceremonies. He wanted to rid religion of priesthood. The Vedic sacrifical rites were intended to lead the weak-minded gradually from the search of the temporal to the search of the eternal. The seekers of Liberation were urged to turn away from them. "The foolish who revel in them as the highest good succumb again and again to old age and death," says the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad.[12] The Bhagavad-gītā also has denounced them.[13]

5. Early Buddhism is Hinduism made dynamic. How it spread in India and abroad.

The Buddha made the Upaniṣadic religion dynamic. He broke its age-old exclusiveness and freely circulated religious ideas through the common dialect of the people. So far Sanskrit was used in all formal teaching of religion. It was a literary language known to the cultured class. Religious books were written in Sanskrit. It was the Buddha who for the first time delivered sermons in Pāli, the spoken dialect of a vast majority of the people in the central part of northern India, where he travelled as a preacher. He imparted religious teachings without any distinction of caste, culture, rank, merit, age or sex. He had both monastic and lay disciples. He also sent his disciples to all directions as missionaries. As a result, religious and moral ideals permeated all strata of society and brought about a transformation in social conditions and the lives of the people in general. Buddhist monasteries became centers of education. The humanitarian deeds of the

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[11] *Vide* XVII: 5, 6, 19; VI: 16, 17.

[12] I: 2. 7.

[13] II: 42-44.

Buddhists improved the material conditions of the country. Arts, literature, and commerce developed. References to work for public good (Pūrta karma) are to be found in the Upaniṣads. Though such activities as digging wells, tanks, etc., constructing roads, planting trees for shade, establishing temples, almshouses, prevailed in India from very ancient time, they received great impetus from the teachings of the Buddha.

For about two hundred years after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa (543 B.C.) his religion was confined within the borders of India. It prevailed mostly in northern parts of the country and developed side by side with Hinduism. There was no antagonism between the two religions that grew out of the same main stem; rather they influenced each other. As noted by Sir Charles Eliot, "The development of Brahmanism and Buddhism was parallel: if an attractive novelty appeared in one, something like it was soon provided by the other."[14] Buddhist evangelism received a fresh impetus under the patronage of the Emperor Aśōka (273-236 B.C.), who made it a state religion and whose sovereignty extended almost all over India. Himself a Buddhist convert and an ardent follower of the new religion, he made vigorous efforts to propagate Dharma (the moral and religious ideal taught by the Buddha) as widely as possible for "the welfare and happiness of the people" in India and outside. Throughout his empire he founded monumental pillars engraved with edicts setting forth Dharma and his own objectives; and similar edicts were engraved on rocks and caves.

It is he who paved the way for the Buddhist missionaries—occasionally helped by later kings like Kaṇiṣka[15]—to take Buddhism to central Asia, China, Japan, and Tibet in the north, and to Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and other countries in the south. Obviously, Buddhism did not spread in the wake of military conquests; it was the moral fervor of its messengers that paved the way for its expansion. The Buddhist evangelists won the people wherever they went by example as well as by precept. They respected indigenous faith and culture of the land and worked for their fulfilment. Above all, it was their solicitude for the material and the moral well-being of the people that made an irresistible appeal.

The Buddhist monasteries in India turned into great seats of learning. Students from Tibet, China, and other Asiatic countries came to study at the universities of Nālandā, Valabhī, Vikramaśilā, Odantapurī. In northwest India Taxilā (near Rawalpindi in Pakistan) was a Buddhist university town where Greek, Persian, and Indian scholars met.

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[14] *Hinduism and Buddhism,* Vol. I, p. XXX, Barnes and Noble, Inc., New York, 1957.

[15] Ruler of a vast territory extending from Central Provinces in India to Central Asia during the last quarter of the first century, A.D. Like Aśōka he was a Buddhist convert. He belonged to the Kusan branch of the Yuehchi tribe, which originally inhabited Chinese Turkestan (modern Sinkiang).

6. The decline of Buddhism; its external and internal causes.

With the extension of Buddhism its intensity decreased. It had to accommodate itself more or less to the local conditions wherever it went. Thus, many new elements were incorporated into the original system. This contributed more to its weakness than to its strength. In India multitudes of foreign settlers with their divergent customs, racial characteristics and cultural standards found access into the fold of Buddhism, which had no caste restriction as Hinduism had. Some foreign rulers of Indian territories, who inhabited the country embraced the new religion. At the early stages of its development Buddhism flourished under their patronage—particularly under the Greek King Menander (Milinda, c. 1st century B.C.) and the Kushan King Kaṇiṣka (c. 1st century A.D.). But about five hundred years later it suffered incalculable loss of lives and property from the fanatical barbarities of the Hun and other invaders of India. And this hastened its decay.

But there were the causes of its decline in Buddhism itself. Shortly after the death of the Buddha controversies arose on those vital questions to which he gave no categorical answers. The Buddha's silence on the subjects of great import, such as the fundamental Reality, the real self of man, and his ultimate goal, left ample room for conflicting views with regard to them and consequent disunity in the order.

Another cause of the decline of Buddhism is that it was ill suited to the average man. It could appeal only to those who were disillusioned of the charms of life and sought release from every bondage. Its promise of complete deliverance from all sufferings had little meaning for the generality of human beings, whose main concern was the fulfilment of their immediate needs and the desires for pleasure. Since the Buddha did not teach belief in Personal God, there was no room in his religion for prayer, worship, or divine grace. He wanted his disciples to rely on themselves and atatin nirvāṇa by self-effort. But as long as death is inevitable and distress inescapable, as long as there are mishaps and catastrophes beyond human control, man cannot but turn to an almighty, all-knowing, all-merciful Being for relief, protection, help, and grace.

The strongholds of Buddhism were its monasteries, on which depended its development. The lay community was not a dominant force in it as in the Brāhmaṇical religion. From the time of Aśōka the Great (273-236 B.C.), who made Buddhism the State religion, its monasteries had thrived for about six hundred years supported by the munificence of the monarchs and the benefactions of the classes. This was the most glorious period of Buddhism. Then in the fourth century A.D. the Gupta dynasty came into power (320-740 A.D.) and championed the Brāhmaṇical religion. Being deprived of the royal patronage the Buddhist monasteries languished. This was the beginning of the decline of Buddhism and the rise of Hinduism.

7. The development of image-worship in Buddhism. Its adoption by Hinduism. The mutual influence of the two religions.

Since the Buddha did not avow God, ironically, he himself had to fill the place of God in his religion. In less than three hundred years of his disappearance his followers deified him, installed his images in huge and gorgeous temples, and carried on ceremonial worship. Other deities were also introduced liberally and relic-worship started in magnificent stūpas. Architecture and sculpture developed immensely. Such a step was necessary to popularize the religion; but this at the same time lowered its high intellectual standard. From a predominantly ethical course, Buddhism turned into a ritualistic religion evidently under the influence of Hinduism. The change came more upon the Mahāyāna than upon the Hīnayāna sects. It was from Buddhism that image-worship entered into Hinduism. The Vedas prescribed the use of concrete symbols, but not of images. The Hindu Tantras fully adapted the use of images to the worship of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti and other deities and elaborated on the rituals. At the same time the Hindu deities found access to Buddhism. Both the religions gained from the mutual influence. In many respects the Mahāyānist Buddhism resembled Hinduism. On the metaphysical side its Mādhyamika school was tending towards monistic Vedānta.

8. The four Buddhist schools of Philosophy. The advent of Sankara. His distinctiveness.

In ancient India there were rivalries among different schools of thought. Each school had to maintain its position against the criticism of its opponents. The Buddhist teachers had to meet the challenge of the non-Buddhist philosophers. This led to the development of speculative philosophy in Buddhism. Thus arose four major schools of Buddhist philosophy—(1) Vaibhāṣika, (2) Sautrāntika, (3) Yōgācāra, and (4) Mādhyamika. The first two belonged to the Hīnayāna and the last two to the Mahāyāna branch.

None of these schools recognize any abiding entity or a permanent principle either in the objective manifold or in an individual being. They all uphold the doctrine of momentariness, *kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-vāda*. According to this theory nothing lasts more than an instant. An external object is a continuous conformation of momentary physical elements; similarly, the knowing subject, the ego, is a continuous conformation of psychical elements. As a configuration either can last a short or long duration. The view that there is no changeless self beyond the psychophysical flux we call an individual is known as the doctrine of no-self, *nairātmya-vāda*.

The great Buddhist philosophers and logicians, e.g., Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva of the Mādhyamika school, and Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Diṅgnāga, Dharmakīrti of the Yogācāra school maintained by subtle dialectics the doctrines of momentariness and no-self. The Vedic schools, particularly Nyāya, Sāṁkhya, Mīmāṁsā, sharply reacted to their arguments and repudiated their epistemological views in order to overthrow their doctrines. It is said that the great Mīmāṁsā philosopher Kumārila Bhaṭṭa defeated Dharmapāla, the celebrated Buddhist teacher of the university of Nālandā in an open debate. This discredited Buddhism considerably. It was under Dharmapāla that Kumārila had studied Buddhism. He travelled all over India and had disputation with Buddhist and Jaina philosophers, who acknowledged defeat. Thus he made the Mīmāṁsā school predominant. It was at this stage that Śaṅkarācārya appeared on the scene and challenged the Mīmāṁsā school, which was not true to the intent of the Vedas, though founded on their authority. He established Advaita Vedānta on a rational foundation after having refuted all contrary views, the Vedic as well as the non-Vedic. He consummated the work that Gauḍapāda, the teacher of his teacher (paramaguru), had initiated.

The six Vedic schools and the non-Vedic Jainism have explained the śūnya-vāda (lit. the theory of voidness or vacuity) of the Mādhyamika school as nihilism, as the denial of all existences. According to the great Pāli commentator and author, Buddhaghosa, nirvāṇa is "śūnyatā", absolute non-existence. This is no doubt the original meaning of the term. But as used by Nāgārjuna (2nd century A.D.), the greatest exponent of the Mādhyamika school, the term "śūnyatā" implies on the one hand, the non-existence of all that is dependent on causes and conditions, and, on the other, the non-relational absolute existence, undiversified, incomprehensible, and indescribable. In this sense Nāgārjuna's view can be said to be the precursor of the monistic philosophy, which attains its culmination in the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara.

However, there is a vast difference between the way of Nāgārjuna and the way of Śaṅkara. Whatever may be the implication of the term śūnyatā or śūnya, the trend of śūnya-vāda is to disprove the phenomenal existence rather than to establish the transcendental Reality. But, on the contrary, one can see that the sole purpose of Śaṅkara, in disproving the objective manifold has been to establish Nondual Brahman. Unlike the Mādhyamikas he affirms that there cannot be an illusion without a substratum. By instituting the theory of Māyā he has clarified the Advaita position with regard to the empirical order and the transcendental Reality. The corner-stone of his philosophy is man's changeless, indubitable self transcending the ego, which none of the Buddhist schools recognize. According to Śaṅkara it is by realizing the identity of the individual self with the Supreme Self that one attains Liberation and not by comprehending the falsity of the world of phenomena. Rarely does one come across in

Nāgārjuna's philosophy any positive statement on the nature of the ultimate Reality such as Śaṅkara has frequently drawn from the Upaniṣads in support of the Advaita view. To quote a few instances:

> "Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinite" (Tai. U. II:1.1)
> "This self is Brahman" (Ma. U. II)
> "Verily all this is Brahman" (Ch. U. III:14.1)
> "He shining all this shines. Through His radiance all this is manifest" (Ka. U. III:2.15).

The Nondualism of Śaṅkara is based on the rational exposition of the Upaniṣads, the Brahma-sūtras, and the Bhagavad-gītā. It is not a development of Buddhist religion and philosophy, but their fulfilment. He was by no means "a veiled Buddhist (pracchanna Bauddha)", as some philosophers presume. Rather the Buddha can be appropriately considered, as indicated by an eminent contemporary scholar, a veiled Advaitist.

9. The deficiencies of Buddhism. The task before Sankara.

Though derived from the Upaniṣads Buddhism was but a partial presentation of their tenets. What metaphysical truths of the source were implicit in the teachings of the Buddha were later repudiated by a majority of his followers. The strength of Buddhism lay in the exemplary life of its founder, its message of lofty ethical conduct, its ideal of self-dedication to the service of all living beings, and its promise of complete deliverance from all sufferings. Notwithstanding its excellences Buddhism had shortcomings, as we have indicated above. Unlike other religions, it recognized no scriptural authority as the authentic source of man's suprasensuous knowledge. It denied the changeless, immortal self beyond the ego, the sheetanchor of every other religion. Buddhism acknowledged no Personal God, despite the fact that the belief in Him is indispensable in the lives of a vast majority of human beings. It gave no precise positive view of nirvāṇa, the ultimate Goal of man. Nor did it point to any metaphysical ground of man's disinterested love for all living beings.

In short, Buddhism lacked comprehensiveness. It was especially intended for the life of renunciation. It made no adequate provision for the fulfilment of man's desire for temporal good. One distinctive characteristic of the Vedic religion is that it takes into full consideration different grades of men and prescribes disciplinary courses according to their stages of development with the object of leading them all to the highest goal. It has due regard for the seekers of temporal good as well as for the seekers of the supreme good. This principle of recommending courses in view of the individuals' competence is known as adhikāri-bheda-vāda, the doctrine of differentiating the aspirants according to their capacities. But Buddhism did not observe this as a tenet. In admitting persons to the holy orders it hardly considered the prerequisites for the monastic life, which were stressed by the Vedic religion. Śaṅkarācārya addressed himself to the supreme task of establishing a religio-philosophical system free from all such deficiencies as Buddhism had.

10. The early life of Sankara. His mission.

The seer-philosopher Śaṅkarācārya came of a well-known orthodox Brāhmaṅa family of Malabar in southwest India. He was thoroughly steeped in the Vedic lore. While the Buddha denied the authority of the Vedas, Śaṅkara was fully loyal to them.

Even as a boy Śaṅkara was calm and contemplative. His intellect and memory were prodigious. By the time he was seven years old he had finished the whole course of the Vedic studies under an able teacher, who was astounded by the pupil's genius. The boy's profound scholarship and wisdom won the admiration of one and all. His fame extended far and wide. But learning and fame, wealth and position, meant little to young Śaṅkara, whose mind yearned for the experience of the supreme Truth, the sole reality of Brahman. He decided to leave home and approach the great teacher Gōvindapāda, a perfect knower of Brahman, for instruction and initiation into the monastic life (sannyāsa).

At Ōṅkārnāth on the river Narmadā, Śaṅkara lived at the feet of his guru about three years and realized Nondual Brahman in nirvikalpa samādhi. As a result of this experience his heart was filled with spontaneous love for one and all, urging him to enlighten their minds and guide them on the way to supreme peace and blessedness. He was told by Guru Gōvindapāda that he had come to this world to fulfil a divine mission: to reinstate the Vedic religion in its pristine purity and glory after its decline during the rise of Buddhism, and that to accomplish this purpose he was to write a commentary on Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsa's *Brahma-sūtras* (a resumé of the Upaniṣadic teachings and the basis of the Vedānta philosophy) and establish Advaita Vedānta as the meeting ground of all monotheistic and dualistic views, contradictory though they might appear to be.

11. Sankara as a teacher. Lays the foundation of Advaita philosophy by writing commentaries on the triple basis of Vedanta.

At the instruction of the guru, Śaṅkara, a young boy of twelve, came to Vārāṇasī (Banaras), an ancient seat of the Vedic religion and culture, and started teaching in public. Here his first monastic disciple, Sanandana (afterwards known as Padmapāda), one of the chosen four, joined him.[16]

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[16] Padmapāda's sub-commentary on Śaṅkara's commentary on the first four *sūtras* of *Brahma-sūtras* is well known as Pañcapādikā. It laid the foundation of the Vivaraṇa school, one of the two main schools of Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. The other is the Vācaspati school.

As a personal attendant he was closest to Śaṅkara. Gradually many more disciples came.

After staying in Vārāṇasī for some time, Śaṅkara travelled on foot with his disciples all the way to Hardwar and from Hardwar to Badarikāśrama, a place of pilgrimage near the source of the Alakānandā[17] in the high Himālayan altitudes. On his way from Vārāṇasī Śaṅkara visited every notable sacred place and worshipped the Deity in the temple, setting an example for the followers of the path of devotion and demonstrating at the same time that a knower of Nirguṇa Brahman (the Impersonal Absolute) is not devoid of devotion to Saguṇa Brahman, the Personal God. It is said in the Bhāgavatam: "Such is the excellence of the Lord Hari (the Remover of all distress) that even the sages whose delight is in the Supreme Self and who are free from all bondages offer Him spontaneous devotion."[18] According to Advaita Vedānta only highly qualified spiritual aspirants can follow the path of knowledge, the direct approach to Nirguṇa Brahman. Others have to realize Saguṇa Brahman along the path of devotion before they can reach the Nirguṇa.

While staying at Badarikāśrama Śaṅkara wrote his most important works—the commentaries on the ten principal Upaniṣads, the Brahmasūtras, and the Bhagavad-gītā, the triple basis of Vedānta philosophy. It took about three years. Then he visited other holy places in the Himālayas.

12. Sankara meets Kumarila Bhatta. Debates with Mandana Misra, the renowned Mimamsa philosopher, who acknowledges defeat and follows him as a disciple.

Having come down to the plains Śaṅkara went to Prayāg (Allahabad), an ancient seat of Hindu culture, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamunā. His purpose was to hold a debate with Kumārila Bhatta, the greatest advocate of the Mīmāṁsā system, which upheld the Vedic ritualism in opposition to the way of Self-knowledge and the monastic ideal. As the Mīmāṁsā school was predominant at the time, the defeat of Kumārila would prove the invalidity of his system and the validity of Advaita Vedānta. It so happened that just at that time Kumārila was getting ready to immolate himself on a funeral pyre of corn husks in expiation of his sin against his teacher Dharmapāla of Nālandā, under whom he studied Buddhism in the disguise of a Buddhist sramaṇa (itinerant ascetic) with the secret object of challenging him in a debate on behalf of the Mīmāṁsā school (see sec. 8).

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[17] The Ganges (Gaṅgā) is formed of three streams in the Himālayas—the Bhāgirathī, the Mandākinī, and the Alakānandā. The Bhāgirathī is the main stream. The two others are tributaries.

[18] I:7.10.

Kumārila directed Śaṅkara to hold the debate with his pupil, Maṇḍana Miśra, whom he considered even greater than himself and who was living at the time at Māhiṣmatī (a small city not far from Ōṅkārnāth where Śaṅkara met his guru Gōvindapāda). Followed by his disciples Śaṅkara went there. Though at first annoyed at the sight of the shaven head of the young sannyāsī, Maṇḍana Miśra agreed to the debate. Sharp disputation went on for about eighteen days. Finally, Maṇḍana Miśra acknowledged defeat, left his hearth and home and followed Śaṅkara as a disciple. In monastic life he became known as Sureśvarācārya, the celebrated author of a number of valuable works on Advaita Vedānta. Of the chosen four disciples of Śaṅkarācārya—Padmapāda, Sureśvara, Hastāmalaka, and Tōtakācārya—the last two came later.

13. Sankara travels all over India, propagates the teachings, and works for the restoration of the Vedic religion unto the last hour of his life.

Śaṅkara was by now past sixteen. After completing his tour in Southern India as far as the temple of Rāmeśvara Śiva, near the southern-most point of India, he turned northwards and travelled throughout the length and breadth of the country, revisiting many of the holy places. At every notable place he explained the Advaita position and invited its opponents of the Vedic as well as of the non-Vedic schools, to open debate. But not many accepted the challenge. There was a number of debates, mostly with the supporters of the Vedic systems, but none as momentous as the one with Maṇḍana Miśra. In most places people came to him for enlightenment and guidance, for the solution of their problems and for the discussion of their views with him. He did not reject any religious doctrine or system of thought altogether, not even the Buddhist or the Jaina, but pointed out its deficiencies, its misconceptions, its incongruities with the Vedic teachings, rectified its errors and drawbacks, and tried to make it harmonious with the Advaita view. He prescribed religious courses according to the worshipper's inner development and situation in life. He stressed the performance of duties according to the social status (varṇa) and the stage of life (āśrama). He wanted to reform the social order by reforming the lives of the individuals without any revolutionary attempt.

In many places Śaṅkara established not only monasteries and temples, but also Sanskrit academies for the Vedic culture. Besides the commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma-sūtras*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, he wrote a number of valuable guide-books both in prose and poetry, for the seekers of Self-knowledge. He also composed many poems and hymns in praise of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śakti. He stressed the worship of the Personal God especially in these three aspects. His poetry is remarkable for the sublimity of thought and devotional fervor. He was as great a poet as a prose-writer. His style is fluent and rhythmical. His language is marked by profundity and clarity. About twenty-two commentaries, seventy-five hymns and poems and fifty-four guide-books and primers are ascribed to him. Several of them were not his composition in the opinion of some. Śaṅkara was a versatile genius: a mystic, a saint, a philosopher, a polemist, an indefatigable reformer, and a literary man of the highest order.

After twenty years' intense work for the revival of the Vedic religion throughout India, Śaṅkara came to Kedārnāth for the second and last time. He was now in his thirty-second year. He knew that the term of his life was going to expire. But something was yet to be done for the continuity of the work. For the cultivation and the dissemination of spiritual knowledge under monastic guidance he had planned the foundation of four principal monasteries (maths) at four cardinal points of India—at Śṛṅgerī in the south, at Purī in the east, at Dwārkā in the west and at Yōśī in the north. Each monastery was meant to be under the leadership of one of his four chief disciples and to be the custodian of one of the four Vedas. India was to be divided into four sections—southern, eastern, western, and northern—each under the jurisdiction of one of the four monasteries. Being aware of his approaching end, Śaṅkara called his disciples to his side and told them about his plan. The monastery at Śṛṅgerī had already been established by him with Sureśvarācārya as its head. Now he assigned to Padmapāda the leadership of the Gōvardhana Math at Purī, Hastāmalaka the leadership of the Sāradā Math at Dwārkā, and Totakācārya the leadership of the Jyōtirmath at Yōśī in the Himālayas. He also decided that Yajur-Veda was to be taken care of by Śṛṅgerī Math, Ṛg-Veda by Gōvardhana Math, Sāma-Veda by Sāradā Math, and Atharva-Veda by Jyōtirmath. The head of each monastery was to promote both by example and precept the spiritual well-being of the laity as well as the monastics within his jurisdiction. He also drew up certain regulations for the guidance of the monasteries. At Kedārnāth, the mountain-top sacred to Śiva and guarded by snow-clad peaks, he left the body in mahāsamādhi.

14. Sankara's special contribution: A complete religio-philosophical system.

Śaṅkara's special contribution to world-culture is the presentation of the most comprehensive and coherent religio-philosophical system, which is intended not to antagonize, but to fulfil, other systems of thought and culture. Its method is to appraise them in the light of the universal truths, to which they are expected to conform, and not to categorically deny them. By a rational exposition of the three standard works on Vedānta—the Upaniṣads, the Brahma-sūtras, and the Bhagavad-gītā—he has held before man a complete perspective of life, in which mysticism, philosophy, religion, psychology, logic, ethics, and aesthetics have their appropriate places. In his view the same Impersonal Absolute has various aspects in relation to the manifold. The one and the same Supreme Being can be approached in many different ways. There is no contradiction in his system between faith and reason, between knowledge and devotion, between action and contemplation. The relative importance of different aspects of life—spiritual, moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and physical—have been determined and their coordination indicated. The path of pleasure and the path of perfection are harmonized. Being well regulated the one leads to the other, which is the direct way to the supreme Goal.

Śaṅkara has maintained by reason as well as on the authority of the scriptures the reality of Nondual Brahman and disproved all contrary views, the Vedic and the non-Vedic. By cogent arguments he has refuted the ritualism of the Mīmāṁsā school, the dualism of Sāṁkhya and Yōga, the pluralism of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, the realism, the idealism, and the nihilism of the Buddhist schools as well as their theory of momentariness. Further he has repudiated the Jaina plurality of souls and the incongruity in their nature. The absolute unity of Reality as Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss affirmed by Śaṅkara is the ultimate ground of all metaphysical conceptions, of all religious doctrines, of all scientific truths, and of all ethical ideals. There is the culmination of human knowledge.

15. The influence of Sankara's Nondualism on other Vedanta schools. It has created a monistic trend in all of them.

Śaṅkara's Advaita has changed the tone of Hindu religion and philosophy. Since his time the monism of Vedānta has dominated the religious life and thought of India. All dualistic and pluralistic doctrines have paled into insignificance. Atheism has all but disappeared. The Vedic religion has flowed in two main channels—(1) nondualism and (2) monotheism. The two schools based on Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*—known as the Vivaraṇa school and the Vācaspati school—are nondualistic. The five Vaiṣṇava schools—the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja, the Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka, the Dvaita of Madhvācārya, the Suddhādvaita of Vallabhācārya, and the Acintyabhedābheda[19] of Śri Caitanya, are monotheistic. All these five strictly come under Vedānta, being founded on its triple basis—the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma-sūtras*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. They are all monistic in the sense that none of them recognize two ultimate principles but a single fundamental reality, one Supreme Being that holds the entire manifold. God is the sole reality according to all of them. Not only is there no other God, but there is nothing else beyond Him. He is the One Self of all that exists. There is no absolute dualism in Vedānta. Even the system of Madhva, though usually designated as dualism (Dvaita), is not dualistic in the sense in which the Sāṁkhya system of Kapila is. As regards Madhva's dualism (Dvaita) Prof. Hiriyanna remarks:

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[19] Actually founded by Śrī Jīva Gōswāmī on the teachings of Śrī Caitanya and later corroborated by Valadeva Vidyābhūṣaṇ by a commentary on the Brahma-sūtras.

> "If the Advaita explains the prevailingly absolutistic standpoint of Upaniṣadic teachings by postulating only one reality and explaining the rest of the universe as its appearance, the Dvaita does the same by postulating God as only the supreme entity and explaining the rest as altogether dependent upon him."[20]

Besides the schools of Vaiṣṇavism there are in Hinduism other monotheistic schools, e.g., those of Śaivism and Śāktism. The same Supreme Being is worshipped in three different aspects: as Viṣṇu (the Omnipresent Preserver) by the Vaiṣṇavas, as Śiva (the All-good and transcendent Being) by the Śaivas, and as Śakti (Śiva's power, the Mother of the Universe) by the Śāktas. The monotheistic systems of the Śaivas and the Śāktas, though in many respects similar to those of the Vaiṣṇava schools, are not usually included in the Vedānta philosophy, since they are not directly based on the Brahma-sūtras in the way Advaitism and Vaiṣṇavism are. Nevertheless, they recognize the authority of, and are sustained by, the triple Vedānta—the Upaniṣads, the Brahma-sūtras, and the Bhagavad-gītā. The same Upaniṣadic Brahman is conceived of by the Vaiṣṇavas as Sat-cid-ānanda Viṣṇu, by the Śaivas as Sat-cid-ānanda Śiva. It is the dynamic aspect of Śiva that the Śāktas worship as Śakti (power). Thus in a wide sense the Śiva and the Śākta schools are Vedāntic. None of them is dualistic. Kāsmīra-Śaivism and Śāktism are even closer to Advaita Vedānta in their metaphysical conceptions than Vaiṣṇavism.

It may be noted in this context that present-day Hinduism is, truly speaking, the religion and philosophy of Vedānta. None of the six Vedic systems but Vedānta has a religious following in modern India. There are however solitary instances of spiritual aspirants who follow the purely Sāṁkhya or the Yōgic method of self-realization. Buddhism in its decadence has been assimilated by Hinduism. It did not die out in India. Finally, by declaring the Buddha an incarnation of God the Hindu sages turned the Buddha into a Hindu god and his religion into a part and parcel of Hinduism. In three Sanskrit hymns on the Ten Incarnations of Viṣṇu (Daśāvatāra-stōtra), one of which is ascribed to Śaṅkara, the Buddha is paid tribute as an Incarnation. Living Hindu religion is mainly monotheistic Vedānta in different forms. Its prevailing monistic tone is due to the influence of Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta.

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[20] M. Hiriyanna, *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p. 195, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1949.

16. In Swami Vivekananda the Buddha and Sankara meet.

Though well-grounded in the Vedāntic texts and Western thought Swāmī Vivekānanda did not formulate a new philosophical system. It is Śaṅkara's Advaita philosophy that he accepted and expounded in modern terms and found its application in modern life. So far as the basic ideas of Advaita Vedānta are concerned he does not differ from Śaṅkara, but there are some differences in his way of presentation and the emphasis laid by him on its practical aspects. He lived about twelve centuries after Śaṅkara under altogether different circumstances. He has aligned the spiritual outlook of Śaṅkara with the modern outlook upon life and the world. He has explained from the Advaita position how to spiritualize the modern view and way of life. His aim has been the reconstruction of humanity on the spiritual foundation. Śaṅkara reinstated the Vedic religion in its pristine purity and glory after a long period of decadence; so did Swāmī Vivekānanda in the present age. While the Buddha did not acknowledge the authority of the Vedas, both Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda accepted the Vedic texts as the authentic source of suprasensuous knowledge and found them amenable to reason. If the Buddha can be called "the rebel child of Hinduism," both Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda can be regarded its most loyal scions. Both were proud of India's spiritual heritage, and not without reason.

Being a born lover of humanity Swāmī Vivekānanda was naturally drawn more to the Compassionate Buddha as a person than even to Śaṅkara. He united the spiritual idealism of Śaṅkara with the dynamic spirit of the Buddha. In him we find a delightful combination of Śaṅkara's intellect and the Buddha's heart. He impregnated Hinduism with the ideal of complete self-dedication to the service of humanity. He also enkindled in Hinduism the zeal for the dissemination of the gospel of universal truths for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many. About fifteen hundred years after the decadence of Buddhism Swāmī Vivekānanda was the first spiritual messenger of India to the Western world.

Just as the Buddha's heart cried for the alleviation of the sufferings of one and all without any distinction of caste or creed, race or nationality, age or sex, so did Swāmī Vivekānanda's. With the ideal of renunciation he has emphasized the ideal of service: "The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself"[21]. A seeker of Liberation is urged to render service to humanity as a mode of worship. "Ātmanō mōkṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca (for one's own Liberation and for the good of the world)" is his watchword for the Ramakrishna Order. How earnestly he wants them who are ready to join the banner of service to carry the universal, uplifting message of Vedānta to one and all without any distinction whatsoever:

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[21] CW V, p. 157.

> "Aye, let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind everyone, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. Let us proclaim to every soul—'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."[22]

17. Swami Vivekananda in his youth. His spiritual genius recognized by Sri Ramakrishna at the first meeting.

It is said that the leaders of men are born and not created. It cannot but be so especially in the case of those perfected souls that do not merge in Brahman but retain their individuality and are reborn, when necessity arises, under Divine dispensation, for the enlightenment and guidance of humanity. Nevertheless, circumstances help to bring out their inborn genius for leadership and prepare the stage for their specific role. Young Naren, a lad of eighteen, (Swāmī Vivekānanda's family name was "Narendranāth Datta," nicknamed "Naren") was recognized as such a free soul by Sri Ramakrishna, the great Hindu saint and mystic (1836-1886 A.D.), at their first meeting at Daksineswar in December, 1881. A sophomore of the General Assembly's Institute in Calcutta[23], he came there accompanied by two of his relatives, who were staunch devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. Naren was a talented singer and an expert in instrumental music, and used to sing at the services of the Brāhma Samāj. At the request of the devotees he sang two devotional songs. Sri Ramakrishna went into ecstasy as he heard him sing. Naren was treated with special care and affection and asked to come again. He felt mysteriously drawn to the God-intoxicated saint. This meeting was a turning point in Naren's life.

After short intervals he repeated his visits singly. Much bewildered by the saint's loving care and regard for him despite pre-occupation with God, one day Naren asked him point-blank, "Sir, have you seen God ?" "I see Him more intensely than I see you," was the prompt reply. "You can also see Him, if you want," he added. For the first time Naren found a person who could give an affirmative answer to the question, over which he had been pondering for some years and with which he had already approached several notables without receiving a satisfactory reply.

Born with deep spiritual disposition and brought up in a religious atmosphere in an age of intellectual ferment Narendranāth was torn between faith and reason. He had come to the conclusion that his problem could not be solved unless God be a fact of experience. Direct perception of God must be the only solvent for all doubts with regard to His existence. The life of Sri Ramakrishna being a complete demonstration of God-realization had deep meaning for him, yet he could not readily accept his spiritual visions, ecstasies, and experiences. It was the time when religion was carrying on a last ditch fight, as it were, with materialistic and rationalistic philosophy. Theism, materialism, atheism, agnosticism, and scepticism were vying with one another for a hold on human thought and life. Since the introduction of English education in India about the middle of the eighteenth century Western ideas had been infiltrating the Hindu minds. In his thirst for the knowledge of Truth Narendranāth voraciously read Western science, history, and philosophy.

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[22] CW III, p. 192.

[23] Founded by the Scottish General Missionary Board and later known as the Scottish Church College.

18. India at the time of Sri Ramakrishna. His contribution.

During the seven hundred years of Mohammedan rule in India Hinduism had a hard struggle for self-preservation. A number of Hindu saints arose and started reform movements for harmonious relations between the two communities. Since the decline of the Moghul sovereignty in the beginning of the eighteenth century the country had been in a state of political and social chaos. With the establishment of the British rule, as peace and order were restored, English education was introduced. Modern civilization with all its accessories—manners, customs, machinery, steam-boat, locomotive, telegraph—was advancing over the country, while its thoughts and views were encroaching on the minds of the people. At the same time the Christian missionaries were crying down Hindu social customs and religious beliefs and practices. The loss of political freedom had already dealt a severe blow to the national self-esteem of the Indians. Dazed by the glare and self-assurance of the Western civilization they began to doubt the efficacy of their traditional ideals and ways of life. Under the circumstances English-educated Indians were inclined to lose faith in their hoary culture and religion and to adopt Western ideals and methods for the salvation of their country. Not a few brilliant Indians actually deserted their time-honored faith and turned atheists or Christian converts.

But the national spirit of India soon reacted to the impact of Western thought and culture. A number of religious and social movements sprang up to stem the tide of the Western cultural aggression. The most important of them all were the Brāhma Samāj of Bengal and the Ārya Samāj of the Punjab. But none of these movements, whether progressive or reactionary, liberal or conservative, were able to call forth the national genius of India, none could point out to India's children the true import of their voluminous scriptures, the universal character of their religion, the inner harmony of their multifarious beliefs, the fundamental unity of their national life despite divergencies of sect, creed, caste, color, custom, language, and so forth; none could restore their faith in their ancient heritage and indicate how to accept the new on the basis of the old and apply the eternal religious principles to modern conditions.

It was at this junction that Sri Ramakrishna appeared. His life and message threw light on all these points. In them Narendranāth found the key to the soul of India and the way to arouse her slumbering self-consciousness and engage her in the twofold task of national regeneration and spiritual awakening of humanity at large. Sri Ramakrishna's life was a beacon in an age of spiritual darkness. He spoke from his own experience and not from book-learning or speculative knowledge. His statements corroborated the scriptural truths. His life demonstrated the reality of God. He realized God not in one particular aspect, but in many different aspects and forms. He practised one after another the different modes of worship and spiritual disciplines of various Hindu cults and systems and reached God through each one of them. Then he followed the Islamic course with the similar result. Later in life he turned to Christianity and had a vision of Jesus Christ and was convinced of his Divine sonship. As a result of his spiritual realizations his mind was able to dwell on different levels of God-consciousness. It could move up and down the whole gamut of spiritual experience from devotional ecstasy to complete absorption in Nondual Brahman as undivided, undiversified Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

The realization of God is the keynote of his teachings. His message can be summed up as:

To realize God is the goal of human life.
The methods of God-realization differ according to the seekers' capacities and conditions of life.
By following a progressive course of discipline an individual can proceed towards God from any sphere or level of life.
Every religion is a pathway to God-realization.
There should be harmony among the followers of different religions.
God dwells within man as the inmost self.
Man is to be served in the spirit of worshipping God.

In Sri Ramakrishna's life and message Narendranāth found the full meaning of religion.

19. Sri Ramakrishna's last illness. The inception of the Ramakrishna Order. The attainment of nirvikalpa samadhi by Narendranath.

In the summer of 1885 Sri Ramakrishna had a throat ailment, which developed into cancer and terminated his life in a year. In spite of illness he did not stop teaching. As usual, visitors came without any previous notice from a long distance and he spoke to them incessantly. This continued till the last day of his life. So the case went from bad to worse despite the best medical care. For the facilities of medical treatment and nursing he was finally removed to a commodious garden house in Cossipore, a suburb of Calcutta. Here twelve of the young disciples banded together under the leadership of Narendranāth and attended on the Master day and night by turn. Their whole-souled devotion and service to the Master united them into a brotherhood, which led to the foundation of the monastic institution known as the Ramakrishna Order. One day he presented to each of them a piece of ochre cloth, the symbol of the monastic life.

One summer evening in 1886—a few months before Sri Ramakrishna passed away—as Narendranāth was meditating in a room downstairs, he lost all external consciousness, his body became stiff and perfectly still, as if life had passed out of it. His brother-disciple, Gopal Senior, who was in the room was alarmed and hurried upstairs to report to the Master that something tragic had happened. Sri Ramakrishna, who knew the truth, smiled and remarked, "Now he has what he was so eager for. Let him stay there for a while." On regaining the usual consciousness Narendranāth hastened to see the Master, who thus spoke to him: "Now the Divine Mother has opened unto you the whole truth. But the key will remain with me. You will have to work for the fulfilment of the Divine Mission for which you have been chosen. When the work will be over, this treasure will again be opened unto you." On another occasion Naren expressed a strong desire to remain immersed in nirvikalpa samādhi. At this the Master said, "You are not meant for this. You are to see God in one and all and serve Him in them."

A few days before his passing away on August 16, 1886, Sri Ramakrishna told the young disciples to look upon Naren as their leader, and then turning to Naren he said, "I leave the boys to your care. Hold them by your love. See that they devote their lives to the spiritual ideal and do not go back to the world." He also transmitted his powers to Naren saying, "By these powers you will accomplish great things in the world. Until then you will not return to where you have come from."

20. Founding of the new monastery and the Ramakrishna Order after the Master's departure. Swami Vivekananda as the itinerant monk. His arrival in America.

Shortly after the Master's disappearance the young disciples[24] rallied and started, with the help of the lay disciples, a monastery in a rented house at Baranagore close to Daksineswar. There in January 1886, at Naren's suggestion, they all took sannyāsa (the monastic vow) according to the Vedic rites. There were fifteen of them. Each had received a new name. Another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna joined the monastic order a few years later. Thus the nucleus of the Ramakrishna Order of monks was formed with sixteen immediate disciples of the Master.

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[24] Excepting one, Gopal Senior, who was even older than Sri Ramakrishna by six years, the rest were young, in their twenties or less.

For about six years Swāmī Vivekānanda travelled as an itinerant monk all over India from the Himālayas to Cape Comorin and came in close touch with the people of all classes and ranks from the Mahārājās to the peasants, from the learned Brāhmaṇas to the pariahs. His heart bled at the sight of the abject poverty, misery, and ignorance of the Indian masses. He concluded that for the regeneration of India he must shoulder a twofold arduous task: the upliftment of the people in general and the improvement of the condition of women.

He observed the weaknesses as well as the strength of India; he studied her various problems—economic, political, social, educational, religious, and so forth; and he decided what was necessary for their solution. Underlying all diversities of sects, castes, doctrines, rites, customs, and so forth, he discerned the spiritual unity of Indian life; he found that spirituality was the very life-blood of India and that her national regeneration must be on a spiritual basis.

Filled with the deepest compassion for the suffering millions of India, as Swāmī Vivekānanda awaited an opportunity to start work for the reconstruction of India there arose an occasion for his coming to America; he was asked by some of his devoted admirers of southern India to represent Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions to be held at the World's Fair in Chicago in September, 1893. This he hailed as an opening for his contemplated missions. He conceived the idea that he could convey to America India's spiritual wisdom, in return for which America could provide India with scientific knowledge and technology for the improvement of her material conditions. On May 31, 1893, he sailed from Bombay and arrived in Vancouver, British Columbia, on July 16. From Vancouver he came to Chicago by train.

21. His message at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Stabilizing the Vedanta work in America.

All obstacles to his admission to the World's Parliament of Religions being providentially removed, he was finally accepted as a delegate of Hinduism. His message of the divinity of man and the harmony of religions delivered from the depth of his inner experience made a profound impression on the audience of the Parliament of Religions and paved the way for the propagation of the universal gospel of Vedānta in the Western world.

While delivering his address at the opening session of the august assembly on September 11, 1893, he recited the following Sanskrit verse rendered into English, illustrating the Vedāntic attitude towards the different religions of the world:

> "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."[25]

In his paper on Hinduism read at the Parliament on September 19, he echoed the Vedic sage declaring the divinity of the soul and the way to immortality:

> "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss ! Even ye that reside in higher spheres ! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again." "Children of immortal bliss"—what a sweet, what a hopeful name ! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss—yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners ? It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature."[26]

In his concluding address at the final session of the Parliament of Religions on September 27, 1893, he proclaimed with a prophetic voice:

> "If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity, charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of their resistance: "Help and not Fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."[27]

For nearly three years he stayed in America lecturing before popular and learned audiences, holding classes and conversations in the drawing rooms and clubs, giving interviews to peoples of various ranks, and gaining admirers, friends, and followers by his all-comprehensive teachings and forceful, radiant personality in many places from the Atlantic to the Mississippi.

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[25] The Hymn on the Greatness of Śiva, 7.

[26] CW I, p. 9. *Vide* Sv. U. II: 5, III: 8.

[27] CW I, p. 22.

Closely allied with his message of the divinity of the soul and the harmony of religions was his teaching of the realization of God as the goal of life. We quote from two of his addresses delivered in America:

> "The end of all religions is the realizing of God in the soul. This is the one universal religion. If there is one universal truth in all religions, I place it here, in realizing God. Ideals and methods may differ, but this is the central point. There may be a thousand different radii, but they all converge to the one centre, and that is the realization of God."[28]
>
> "Religion is realization; not talk, nor doctrines, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion."[29]

In April, 1896, Swāmī Vivekānanda went to London, from where he planned to return to India. This was his second visit to England. Before leaving the U.S. he placed his work on a permanent footing by establishing the Vedānta Society of New York and summoning from India his brother-disciple, Swāmī Sāradānanda, to take charge. Moreover, his books on Rāja-Yōga, Karma-Yōga, and Bhakti-Yōga, containing many of his collected addresses and original writings, were published or made ready for publication.

22. He refers to the Buddha and Sankara as teachers of Advaita Vedanta. Stresses its need in the present age. The twofold significance of his message: national and universal.

Both in England and America Swāmijī expounded Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta. He held that Advaita twice saved India from materialism, once through the teachings of the Buddha, and the second time through the teachings of Śaṅkara. "By the Buddha the moral side of the philosophy was laid stress upon; and by Śaṅkarācārya, the intellectual side; he worked out, rationalized and placed before men the wonderful coherent system of Advaita."[30] Swāmī Vivekānanda expressed the view that in the modern age again Advaita Vedānta will save the world from materialism; it alone can satisfy the modern sceptics; the spiritual oneness of all souls taught by Vedānta is the rational basis of ethics; the discoveries of modern science do not weaken but strengthen the Advaita position. "The salvation of Europe depends," said he, "on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita—the nonduality, the oneness, the idea of the Impersonal God—is the only religion that can have any hold on any intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear, and irreligion seems to prevail, and that is why it has taken ground in Europe and America."[31]

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[28] CW I, p. 323.

[29] CW II, p. 394. The lecture on "The Ideal of a Universal Religion" delivered in New York, January 12, 1896.

[30] CW II, p. 139, Lecture on "The Absolute and Manifestation" delivered in London, 1896.

His experiences in the East and the West convinced him that spirituality was the distinctive characteristic of India's national existence and that she had maintained it under the most trying circumstances. He observed that while the West, for strengthening its civilization and culture, needed the spiritual wisdom, inner strength, calmness, patience, and contentment of India's life, India, for her national reconstruction on the existing spiritual foundation, needed the technical efficiency, the scientific knowledge, the power of coordination and organization of the West. The Swāmī's historical knowledge and insight unveiled to him the fact that India's special gift to the world throughout the ages had been the profound truths of spiritual life and that on her regeneration depended the regeneration of the world.

Thus Swāmī Vivekānanda's mission has a twofold significance, national and universal, and the two aspects are closely allied. On the one hand, it calls for the consolidation of the spiritual consciousness of India and setting her to the task of national reconstruction on that basis; on the other hand, it calls for the spiritual awakening of the world at large by sending out from India special messengers trained for the purpose, and the fellowship, based on mutual appreciation and acceptance, of the various world religions.

23. Awakening India. Delivers his message throughout the country. Founds religious and philanthropic institutions for the reconstruction of India and the spiritual enlightenment of man.

Throughout his stay in the West Swāmī Vivekānanda, by letters and writings, was urging his brother-disciples, friends, and students all over India to prepare themselves for the noble mission.

An unprecedented welcome was accorded to Swāmī Vivekānanda on his return to the motherland; everywhere he received ovations. As the nation's hero he proceeded from Colombo to Calcutta, awakening India by his soul-stirring addresses. Again and again he reminded his countrymen of their glorious spiritual heritage and their special rôle in the modern world. But they must set their house in order to get ready for the work outside. Reconstruction of India must be based on the bed-rock of her spiritual resources, the Upaniṣads, the mine of infinite strength. What but faith in the ātman—ever-free, pure, immortal, self-luminous, as declared by the Upaniṣads, can give man strength ? This is what India needed most. Swāmī Vivekānanda stressed the need of the Upaniṣadic teachings on ātman for the regeneration of India and the world at large:

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[31] *Ibid.*

> "Therefore, my friends, as one of your blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you that we want strength, strength, and every time strength. And the Upaniṣads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free; freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom are the watch-words of the Upaniṣads."[32]
>
> "Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity."[33]

Swāmī Vivekānanda has emphasized a twofold application of Vedānta in practical life—(1) arousing man's faith in himself, as noted above, and (2) serving man in the spirit of serving God. Says he:

> "Look upon every man, woman and everyone as God. You cannot help anyone; you can only serve; serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege."[34]
>
> "You may invent an image through which to worship God, but a better image already exists, the living man. You may build a temple in which to worship God, and that may be good, but a better one, a much higher one, already exists, the human body."[35]

After arousing India by public addresses delivered from one end of the country to the other Swāmī Vivekānanda immediately set to work. With the help of his brother disciples (most of whom had already returned to the monastery at his request from their pilgrimages and solitary living) and the young probationers who had joined the Order at his clarion call, and also the lay devotees, whom he had at his beck and call, Swāmijī organized the twin institutions: The Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission. The one is a monastic institution, the principal purpose of which is to develop its members and lay devotees spiritually by means of religious practices, such as worship, prayer, meditation, study, and also to train the monks to be fit teachers of religion. The other is a philanthropic body composed of both monastic and lay members and devoted to public service in all forms, such as religious, cultural, educational, medical. Centers were started in Calcutta and Madras for regular activities and also for temporary relief operations in times of famine, epidemic, flood, earthquake, tornado, and so forth. The present site of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission headquarters at Belur Math was occupied in January 1899.

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[32] CW III, p. 238.

[35] *Ibid.* p. 193.

[34] *Ibid.* p. 246.

[35] CW II, p. 311, Lecture on Practical Vedānta delivered in London on November 12, 1896,

24. Second visit to America. Starts work on the West Coast. The growth of Indian work. Mahasamadhi.

On June 20, 1899, Swāmī Vivekānanda sailed from Calcutta for a second visit to America. He was accompanied by his brother-disciple Swāmī Turīyānanda. From December to May of the next year he gave several courses of lectures in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and adjoining places. To stabilize the work the Vedānta Society of San Francisco was organized and placed in charge of Swāmī Turīyānanda.

After attending the Congress of the History of Religions in Paris, before which he spoke twice, Swāmijī travelled in Europe and returned to India without any previous notice and arrived unexpectedly at Belur monastery in the evening of December 9, 1900. Towards the end of the month he made a trip to Advaita Ashrama at Māyāvatī in the Himālayas.

Next spring he made a trip to Dacca and other notable places in East Bengal and Assam, where he gave public lectures. Afterwards two more centers were started, one in Vārāṇasī (Banaras) and the other in Kankhal. But Swāmijī's health was fast declining. His attention was now directed especially to the training of the young monks and the novices by holding study classes and giving spiritual instructions. Even on the last day of his life, Friday, July the fourth, 1902, he meditated three hours in the morning; in the afternoon he conducted a Sanskrit class for about three hours. In the evening he sat for meditation. An hour later he lay down on the bed and with his eyes fixed in the center of his eye-brows entered into Mahāsamādhi (the highest state of Divine Communion from which there is no return). A heavenly lustre shone upon his face. The shocking news of the sudden departure of the mighty leader cast a gloom upon countless human hearts the world over.

25. A distinctive character of Swamiji's message is its comprehensiveness. It is meant for all grades of men.

In conformity with the Vedic teachings both Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda recognize a twofold way to the Supreme Good—the path of secular desires (pravṛtti-mārga) and the path of renunciation or desirelessness (nivṛttimārga), in other words, the search for the temporal and the search for the eternal. The path of secular desires being regulated by the moral ideal (dharma) leads to the path of renunciation, or desirelessness, which is the direct way to the Supreme Good. Śaṅkara aptly remarks in the beginning of his commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā: "The religion of the Vedas is a twofold way: the way of desire and the way of renunciation. This twofold religion, in which one of the ways is the direct means to prosperity and the other to the Supreme Good, is the basis of world order and security." Nevertheless, his message is intended primarily for the followers of the path of renunciation. The followers of the path of secular desires are expected to be ready for the path of renunciation in due course. Śaṅkara's attention has not been directed to them. The same is true with regard to other great spiritual leaders. Interested as they have been in the well-being of all, their teachings apply specifically to the spiritually inclined rather than the worldly minded.

But Swāmī Vivekānanda's all-compassing vision has included the seekers of temporal values as well as the seekers of the Supreme Good. He sees humanity as a whole and feels equally concerned about all grades of peoples. His aim is to lead every individual at whatever level, or in whatever sphere, of life to the Highest Goal along his own line of development. This indeed is the intent of the Vedic religion. To quote Swāmī Vivekānanda:

> "Take man where he stands and from there give him a lift."[36]
>
> "All the men and women in any society are not of the same mind, capacity, or of the same power to do things; they must have different ideals, and we have no right to sneer at any ideal."[37]
>
> "Our duty is to encourage everyone in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth."[38]

26. His divergences from the traditional way of Vedanta do not however mean deviation from its true spirit.

From the earliest days the Upaniṣadic seers have imparted the cardinal Vedic teaching of the divinity of the soul exclusively to the seekers of Self-knowledge. Their sole purpose has been the spiritual development of the aspirant. Śaṅkara and other classical teachers of Advaita school have followed this time-honored course. But Swāmī Vivekānanda has deviated from the traditional way. As we have noted above, (sec. 16) he is for proclaiming this message to one and all, to the seekers of temporal values as well as to the seekers of Self-knowledge. He recommends its application not only for spiritual development but for material and intellectual development as well, Says he:

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[36] CW II, p. 382.

[37] CW I, p. 39.

[38] *Ibid.*

> "This infinite power of the Spirit brought to bear upon matter, evolves material development, made to act upon thought, evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon Itself, makes of man a God. . . Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it."[39]

However, Swāmijī's method is not inconsistent with the way of the Vedic religion, which recommends lower as well as higher forms of worship of God—the one with secular desires and the other without secular desires—according to the worshipper's inner development. The truth is, the worship of God with desires (sakāma upāsanā) gradually leads to the worship of God without desires (niṣkāma upāsanā). By continuing to worship God even for temporal values, the worshipper develops the disposition to worship God for God's sake, as he becomes convinced of His loving grace. Similarly, by trying to hold to the spiritual self beyond the ego even for the sake of secular interests a person gradually becomes awakened to the innate glory of the Self and turns to the ideal of Self-realization.

Another instance of Swāmī Vivekānanda's divergence from the classical Vedānta may be noted here. Traditionally, the Vedāntic teachers instruct the seekers of Liberation to devote themselves to solitary spiritual practice for the cultivation of Self-knowledge as a means to Liberation. But Swāmī Vivekānanda enjoins on them a twofold duty—the cultivation of Self-knowledge by solitary spiritual practice and also rendering service to humanity as a part of discipline for Self-realization. So is his watchword for the Ramakrishna Order—"*Ātmanō mōkṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca* (while striving for his own Liberation the seeker should work for the good of the world as well)."

Further, in Swāmī Vivekānanda's view the great exponents of the different systems of Vedānta, such as Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Advaita, have been in a sense one-sided in their interpretation of the Upaniṣadic texts. Though the main theme of the Upaniṣads is the identity of the jīva and Brahman and the ultimate reality of nonrelational, nondual Brahman, yet they contain passages representing other viewpoints than the Advaita suited to different grades of spiritual aspirants. But the founder of every system, Śaṅkara not excepted, has tried to explain the Upaniṣadic passages, one and all, from his particular position. As observed by Swāmī Vivekānanda: "We find that an Advaitist teacher keeps intact those texts [of the Upaniṣads] which especially teach Advaitism, and tries to interpret the Dualistic or Qualified-nondualistic texts into his own meaning. Similarly we find Dualistic teachers trying to read their dualistic meaning into Advaitic texts."[40]

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[39] CW IV, pp. 297-8.

27. The difference between Sankara's and Swami Vivekananda's view of karma does not involve any contradiction between them.

Śaṅkara admits no conjunction (samuccaya) of jñāna and karma. According to him the two are contradictory. They cannot be practiced together. Jñāna is the sole means to Liberation. There is no alternative way to this Goal. Thus he refutes the alternation (vikalpa) of jñāna (knowledge) and karma (work) as well as their conjunction (samuccaya) in the attainment of Liberation.

But Swāmī Vivekānanda obviously supports both vikalpa (alternation) and samuccaya (conjunction) of karma and jñāna as means to Liberation. Says he:

> "Each one of our yogas is fitted to make man perfect even without the help of the others, because they have all the same goal in view. The yogas of work, of wisdom, and of devotion are all capable of serving as direct and independent means for the attainment of Mōkṣa."[41]
>
> "But you must, at the same time, remember that these divisions are not very marked and quite exclusive of each other. Each blends into the other. But according to the type which prevails we name the divisions. It is not that you can find men who have no other faculty than that of work, nor that you can find men who are no more than devoted worshippers only, nor that there are men who have no more than mere knowledge."[42]

Yet the contradiction between Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda is only apparent. The truth is, they have used the term "karma" from two different points of view. Consequently, their verbal statements regarding karma differ, but present truths from two different angles.

Swāmī Vivekānanda has used the term "karma" in a wider sense than Śaṅkara. As long as the work is done with the ego-idea, such as "I do the work", "I must enjoy its fruits", it creates a bondage for the worker. In such a case the work is regarded as "karma" by both Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda. But when the worker overcomes the ego-idea by developing an insight into the true nature of the Self, his activities no longer create a bondage for him, and his work, in Śaṅkara's view, is only a semblance of karma, but actually a form of jñāna (knowledge). But even then the work is counted

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[40] CW III, p. 397.

[41] CW I, p. 91.

[42] CW I, p. 106.

"karma" by Swāmī Vivekānanda. The difference between Śaṅkara and Vivekānanda is evidently due to the fact that in considering karma the one has been inclined to the subjective and the other to the objective viewpoint.

The Vedāntic teachers agree on the point that when a spiritual aspirant by the practice of karma-yōga gains the competence for the practice of the yōga of knowledge (jñāna), or devotion (bhakti), or meditation (dhyāna), through the purification of the mind (cittaśuddhi), he can still continue the performance of his duties, domestic or social, even though work is no longer necessary for his inner development. But although working, he is no longer a karma-yōgī according to Śaṅkara; but Swāmī Vivekānanda chooses to call him a karma-yōgī. Thus, in Vivekānanda's view karma-yōga reaches as near the goal as any of the other three yōgas; it can lead a person to Liberation singly or conjointly with the other yōgas.

That a seeker of Self-knowledge, whose mind is purged of all secular desires, does not necessarily give up his duties towards his fellow-beings, Śaṅkara admits; but in no case does he consider him a karma-yōgī, but a jñāna-yōgī, pure and simple. It is not even a case of jñāna-yōga cum karma-yōga in his view. This idea is thus expressed by him in his commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā.

> "Now a person, who having been first engaged in work owing to ignorance and worldly attachment and other evil tendencies, and having once attained purity of mind by sacrificial rites, charity, austerity, etc., arrives at the grand truth that 'all is one, the Brahman, the Absolute, the non-agent', may continue performing work in the same manner as before with a view to set an example to the masses, though neither work nor its result attracts him any longer. This semblance of active life on his part cannot constitute that course of action with which knowledge is sought to be conjoined as a means of attaining mōkṣa."[43]

Thus, according to Śaṅkara, the yōgas of jñāna (knowledge) and karma (work) are intended to be practiced by the spiritual aspirants of two different grades. Or they can be practiced by the same spiritual aspirant at two different stages of development.

28. The reason why Sankara has taken a restricted and Swami Vivekananda a wide view of karma.

In order to establish the reality of Nondual Brahman as declared by the Upaniṣads Śaṅkara had to repudiate the Mīmāṁsā doctrine of the supremacy of karma and advocate the supremacy of jñāna. This is perhaps the reason why he emphasized jñāna and used "karma" in a restricted sense. While refuting the Mīmāṁsā view that the purpose of the entire Vedas, comprising karma-kāṇḍa (work-section) and jñāna-kāṇḍa (knowledge-section) is to advocate action and not knowledge. Śaṅkara maintains that the work-section of the Vedas prescribes karma for the unillumined as preparatory to Self-knowledge, which is the direct means to Liberation and the purport of both the sections.[44] He stresses the inner spirit of renunciation resulting from knowledge rather than the actual performance of work.

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[43] II: 11.

But Swāmī Vivekānanda had to face a different situation. He lived in the modern age. He had to deal with the present active, busy, complex life of intellectual triumph and material achievements—a life which cannot be readily turned into primitive simplicity or meditative quietude. The age therefore demanded of him some spiritualizing principle of karma, which would serve as a pivot for its maddening course of activity. Then, there were others, particularly in India, who betook themselves to inaction under the pretence of contemplative passiveness. They had to be roused to action with a fresh and sublime vision of the active life. Consequently, Swāmī Vivekānanda had to present karma-yōga with a broad and elevated outlook. In fact, he laid greater stress on renunciation *in* work than renunciation *of* work. It should not, however, be supposed that the Swāmī did not find any necessity of karma-sannyāsa (renunciation of work) for this age. The bliss and glory of the reposeful life of a recluse had a peculiar charm for him. It had to him a value all its own. But rare individuals are entitled to this. "The highest kind of men," says he, "silently collect true and noble ideas, and others, the Buddhas and the Christs, go from place to place preaching them and working for them."[45]

29. By introducing work as worship into every sphere of life Swami Vivekananda has welded together the ethical and the spiritual ideal. This is his special contribution to the present age.

In one respect Swāmī Vivekānanda has made a distinct contribution to the ideal and practice of karma-yōga. To do one's duties surrendering the fruits of actions to God is, of course, an indirect way of worshipping Him. God is the inmost Self dwelling in the hearts of all. Swāmī Vivekānanda exhorts man to see God in his fellow-beings and worship Him directly through service to them (see sec. 23).

Further he says:

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[44] *Vide* BS I:1.4. com.

[45] CW I, p. 103.

> "We have to cover everything with the Lord Himself, not by a false sort of optimism, not by blinding our eyes to the evil, but by really seeing God in everything. Thus we have to give up the world, and when the world is given up, what remains ? God. What is meant ? You can have your wife; it does not mean that you are to abandon her, but that you are to see God in the wife....So in everything. In life and in death, in happiness and in misery, the Lord is equally present. The whole world is full of the Lord. Open your eyes and see Him. This is what the Vedānta teaches."[46]
>
> "He who sees Śiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Śiva, and if he sees Śiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Śiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Śiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples."[47]

In Swāmī Vivekānanda's view all domestic and social duties, as well as humanitarian deeds can be performed in the spirit of worshipping God in man. His message is the logical conclusion of the teachings of the Upaniṣads and the Bhāgavad-gītā. Truly speaking, it is not altogether a new message. But its practical application in every sphere of human life has not been tried before. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Śrī Kṛṣṇa urges Uddhava to see God in all beings and regard them as such:

> "With a pure mind one should observe in all beings as well as in oneself only Me, the ātman, who am both inside and out, and all-pervading like space."
>
> "This looking upon all beings as Myself in thought, word, and deed, is to My mind, the best of all methods of worship."[48]

As declared by the Upaniṣads and other Vedāntic texts this mode of seeing and worshipping God in all beings is natural with the seers and the lovers of God who attain illumination. It is the spontaneous expression of their inner experience. Rare individuals, highly advanced in spiritual life, have also carried this ideal into actual practice. But its application in the lives of the spiritual aspirants in general has not been tried before. Such a course has been recommended by Sri Ramakrishna in the present age. "No, not kindness to living beings, but service to God dwelling in them," says he. Further, "If God can be worshipped through a clay image, then why not through a man ?" It was the genius of Swāmī Vivekānanda to find new light in this precept of the Master and seek its practical application in the modern age for the amelioration of man's condition in every sphere of life. For this purpose he has founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission—a religious and philanthropic institution that has developed into a world-wide organization—the monastic and the lay members of which strive to render service to the ignorant, the needy, the distressed and the diseased as the veritable worship of God dwelling in them. Herein the ethical and the spiritual ideals have been welded together.

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[46] CW II, p. 146. (Lecture on "God in Everything" delivered in London on October 27, 1896).

[47] CW III, p. 142.

[48] XI: 29.12, 19.

30. In neo-Vedanta of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ethical and spiritual idealism blend—a significant note of distinction from the classical Vedanta of Sankar.

Finally, I shall dwell on a significant point of distinction between the neo-Vedānta of Ramakrishna-Vivekānanda and the classical Vedānta of Śaṅkara. Both the sections hold that a person can realize Brahman and attain Liberation while dwelling in the body and live in the world as a free soul until the term of life due to karma expires. But Śaṅkara and his school have emphasized the ideal of Liberation—the cessation of all sufferings and the attainment of Supreme Bliss in complete absorption in Brahman; whereas Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples have emphasized the ideal of living in the world as a free soul for the well-being of humanity. To come down to the realm of manifestation (the Līlā) after realizing the Absolute (the Nitya) and live with full consciousness of God everpresent in all things and beings is declared by Sri Ramakrishna as the state of supra-knowledge and supra-devotion. In his own words: "A man should reach the Nitya, the Absolute, by following the trail of the Līlā, the relative. It is like reaching the roof by the stairs. After realizing the Absolute, he should climb down to the relative and live on that plane in the company of devotees, charging his mind with the love of God."[49]

Sri Ramakrishna himself lived on the border-line between the Absolute and the Relative; so he was able to move from one to the other with ease. He saw Nārāyaṇa (the Omnipresent Being) dwelling in all and dealt with them with that spirit. He urged his disciples to live in the world as free souls after the realization of Brahman and render service to God dwelling in all beings instead of being merged in the Absolute. As we have noted above, one day the young disciple Naren begged Sri Ramakrishna to grant him the boon to remain immersed in the Bliss of Brahman. The Master rebuked the pupil for being so narrow-minded and said, "You see, Naren, there is a state even higher than this, you are meant for that. Instead of being merged in Brahman you are to see God dwelling in all and love and serve Him in them. This is supra-knowledge (vijñāna)." How fully the disciple responded to this exhortation of the Master is evident from his own words written in a letter to an American admirer on July 9, 1897: "May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls—and above all, my God, the wicked, my God, the miserable, my God, the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of my worship."[50] This reminds us of Avalōkiteśvara, who being animated by the Bōdhisattva ideal of mahākaruṇā (supreme compassion), sacrificed personal nirvāṇa within his reach in order to strive for the deliverance of all living creatures. He did not want to attain final emancipation until all others had been set free completely.

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[49] *The Gospel of Sri Ramakṛishna*, p. 257.

Sri Ramakrishna once chided another young disciple, Hari (Swāmī Turīyānanda), for seeking Liberation by being merged in Brahman. Swāmī Turīyānanda related to us the following incident, as we gathered in his room in Vārāṇasī (Banaras) one morning in January, 1921, for his blessed company. In his words: "One day as I visited the Master he asked me, 'Well, Hari, what do you want ?' 'Mōkṣa,' I forthwith replied. 'You are small-minded,' he rejoined. I looked at him in wonderment. Do not all Vedānta books proclaim mōkṣa to be the highest goal of life ? I thought within myself. 'You see,' continued the Master, 'the expert chess-players are so sure of winning the game that they turn down the pieces just before reaching the goal in order to continue the play. The illumined souls know that they are ever-free. Whether they dwell in the body or not it makes no difference to them. So they are not afraid of being reborn time and again for helping the bound souls to attain Liberation. But the unillumined seekers are too eager to get free from the wheel of birth and rebirth."

Swāmī Turīyānanda at the same time pointed out that only a select few among the liberated-in-life (jīvanmukta) are capable of dedicating themselves to the supreme ideal of helping all living creatures to attain Liberation without seeking final emancipation by merging into the Infinite Bliss of Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna called these blessed ones "ever-free (nitya-mukta)." He included some of his disciples, especially Swāmī Vivekānanda and Swāmī Brahmānanda in this rank. It is worthy of note in this context that the Mahāyāna Buddhism sets before every Bōdhisattva (the aspirant after bōdhi or nirvāṇa) the ideal of mahākaruṇā (supreme compassion), being filled with which he should seek Buddhahood so that by becoming a buddha he can work for the emancipation of all living beings before attaining final nirvāṇa himself.[51]

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[50] *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, CLVIII.

Be that as it may, by emphasizing the ideal of service to humanity in the spiritual life before, and after, the attainment of illumination Swāmī Vivekānanda has linked Vedāntism with Buddhism in modern times. In his life and message we find a happy union of the ethical idealism of the Buddha and the spiritual idealism of Śaṅkara. In his view ethical life must be an expression of spiritual consciousness; one is incomplete without the other.

ABBREVIATIONS

BS	Brahma-sūtras
Com.	Commentary
CW	Complete Works of Swāmī Vivekānanda
Ch. U.	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
Ka. U.	Kaṭha Upaniṣad
Ma. U.	Maṇḍukya Upaniṣad
Śv. U.	Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

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[51] *Vide* Śānti Deva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra.*

UNIVERSAL IDEAS IN THE ANCIENT CANAANITE AND BIBLICAL-ISRAELITE RELIGIONS

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I

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be able to take part in this Congress as a representative of German religious, theological and Biblical studies. The Congress takes place at the end of the "Vivekananda Birth Centenary Celebration Year". And Vivekananda certainly belongs to the great men of India to whom we are pleased to pay tribute, just as every sensible person will encourage the fundamental idea of the Congress, namely, to bring about and strengthen a spirit of understanding, tolerance and co-operation in matters of the spirit and of the world around us, and to help peace on earth and good will among men. When Vivekananda took part in the World Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893 his speeches met with great approval, and he successfully preached the Vedanta doctrine of Ramakrishna in Europe, too. What makes his ideas important for us is his tolerance towards other religions and the view that the spirit of Vedanta shall make a Hindu a better Hindu and a Christian a better Christian. Who ought not to become a better person than he is ?

The Christian religion in Europe is often exposed to the danger of being overwhelmed by materialistic civilization and it is hard-pressed by militant atheism. But its everlasting features are God's love for Man and Man's love for God and for his fellows. When Jesus was asked by a man what he must do to inherit eternal life he made him tell him what his religion taught him about this: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself. Then Jesus said: Do this, and you will live (Luke 10, 25ff).

Again and again we read in our Bible that God is love (1 John 4, 16), that His word is the true light that enlightens every man (John, 1, 9), that He did not leave Himself without witness (Acts 14, 17) and that He desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2, 4). Here we meet with the universal aspect of His revelation. God is not a God of the Jews and Christians alone. The adherents of non-Christian religions are not excluded from the love of God. This is the Bible's doctrine which does not restrict God's purposes and acts to the few Israelite tribes and the Christian churches, but which sees all men and all nations embraced by His love from the time when Man first began to walk on this earth down to the end of our world.

Such a universal idea has existed right from the early days of Christian theology. Augustine, a bishop held in high esteem by the European Churches, declared about 400 A.D. that "the salvation brought by the Christian religion has never been unavailable for a man who was worthy of it."[1] In the 15th century Nikolaus of Cusa recognized that "God is sought in various ways and called by various names in the various religions, that he has sent various prophets and teachers in various ages to the various peoples".[2] He would certainly not have hesitated to number Vivekananda among these teachers.

When towards the end of the 18th and during the 19th century knowledge of the religions of the East became more and more widespread in the West it was many of the greatest minds of the western world which became enthusiastic about eastern and more especially Indian wisdom. The comparative study of religion disclosed many natural parallels between Christian and non-Christian religions. And such religions, especially those of the Ancient Near East, revealed themselves as the actual source of many Biblical-Christian ideas and features of worship and organization. Even the New Testament in our Bible has been strongly influenced by its Jewish and Hellenistic-Oriental background. The Biblical-Christian faith was prepared, born and has developed, like every other religion, in a long historical process within the great stream of universal religious history. At the same time it has had from the beginning a tendency towards universal ideas and has continued to develop these ideas despite opposition in its own ranks.

I should now like to point out these universal ideas using the first, originally Israelite part of our Bible, which we call the Old Testament. But I should also like to make clear that these ideas have not arisen naturally but that they, at least in part, originated in the ancient Canaanite religion with which the Israelites became acquainted in Palestine. This is a good example of the interdependence of religions and also of the universalism which can arouse or promote understanding, tolerance and co-operation.

II

Since the early Bronze Age in the third millennium B.C., Syria and Palestine have been populated mainly by people of Semitic origin, known to us as Canaanites. In the 19th and 18th centuries B.C. there appeared a new Semitic ruling class, and then in the centuries following, as a further element in the population, a group of Churrites and a new ruling class of Indo-European descent. These and other people made a varied mixture in which, however, the Canaanite element predominated. This was also the case in the Phoenician seaport towns. Of these towns one has become particularly important for us. This is ancient Ugarit—on the Syrian coast, opposite the eastern tip of Cyprus—where excavations have been going on since 1929. Texts in eight languages have been found there which provide us with a very clear picture of the Canaanites' relations to other countries and civilizations and also of the Canaanite religion.

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[1] Augustine, Ep. CII, 5.

[2] Nikolaus of Cusa, De pace seu concordantia fidei, ed. 1514, I, fol. CXIV b.

Ugarit was politically dependent alternately on Egypt and the Empire of the Hittites in Asia Minor. In addition it can be seen that there was considerable cultural influence from Babylon, which, however, was tolerated only with reluctance. All the more willingly did Ugarit and other Phoenician ports establish friendly relations with the Mediterranean world. This is the most important thing that the excavations have taught us. The Ancient Near East was no self-contained monolithic block, but it was open to the West. The Canaanite Phoenicians were the mediators between the civilizations and religions in the East and the West. Therefore we may no longer make a sharp distinction between the Ancient Near East and the ancient world around the Mediterranean, between the Semites and the Indo-Europeans. On the contrary, they had contacts with, and influenced, each other—through the Indo-European Hittites but mainly through the Semitic Phoenicians.

The universal effect of these relations is seen chiefly in the Ugaritic script. It is a cuneiform script in the manner of the Babylonian script. But unlike this each sign represents not a syllable but a letter. Thus the script is adapted to the alphabet which was also invented by the Canaanite Phoenicians. The alphabet and alphabetic script were taken over on the one hand by the Israelites and other oriental peoples and on the other hand about 900 B.C. by the Greeks. When all is said and done, our alphabet and our script are inherited from the Phoenicians. But the people of Ugarit did not only profit from their relations with the East, with Babylon, through using the signs of the cuneiform script, but they also made it easier for the Greek world of the Mediterranean area to read their script. For whilst the Semitic alphabet usually contains only consonants and no vowels the Ugaritic alphabet indicates the three vowels a, i and u.

The universal influence of the Phoenicians is seen further in the ideas of the Greeks about the genesis of the gods and the origin of the world.[3]

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[3] Cf. O. Eissfeldt, Taautos und Sanchunjaton, 1952; "Phönikische und griechische Kosmogonie", Éléments orientaux dans la religion grecque, 1960, pp. 1-15.

If we compare the description of the Phoenician Sanchunjaton, about which Philo Byblios has, at a later date, given us a little information, with the Greek descriptions in Hesiod, Anaximander and Democritus we find many similarities which are certainly not due to chance. Sanchunjaton, who lived in the second millennium B.C., has the priority; the later Greeks are dependent on him. The Phoenicians were the givers, the Greeks the receivers.

These universal influences of Phoenician civilization have their origins in the world-embracing, universal spirit of the Phoenicians, and it is with this spirit that universal ideas in the Canaanite religion accord.

Although there was never a monotheistic trait in the Canaanite religion, the god El—who was originally the most important god in Ugarit too—played a fundamental rôle in it and possessed universal characteristics. On one occasion El presides over the assembly of all the gods. He is called "Father of Years", "Father of the Gods", "Father of Mankind" and "Creator of Creatures". The other gods are referred to as "family of El" and "circle of the sons of El". That he is not only the father of both gods and men, but that the nature of his creativity is also cosmic, may be seen from the epithet in Canaanite Jerusalem where he is called "creator of heaven and earth" (Gen. 14, 19). His attitude is "the highest virtue the Arabs knew in a ruler, hilm. This means a mixture of goodness, friendliness and wisdom, which results in moderation and tolerance, but after all is based on self-reliance and belief in one's own power, so that one is able to let the forces have free scope while standing in the point of balance".[4]

In Ugarit, in northern Syria, El has undergone a progressive degradation during the 15th century B.C., while Baal is the rising young god. In Palestine, on the other hand, El was still the chief god at the time of the Israelites' arrival and only later was he supplanted by Baal. This circumstance was to be of the greatest importance for the Israelites who became acquainted with El while he was still the chief god of the Canaanites. For a time they took over the El religion or subordinated their god Yahveh to El. But above all they identified El and Yahveh with one another and transferred the universal traits in the image of El to Yahveh. This then established the universal character of Israel's god. He appropriated the function of creator of the world and king of the gods which was transferred in his being the king of all men. He was the one who no longer simply claimed dominion over the people of Israel but who determined and presided over the fates of all nations and all men. He received the impetus for an evolution of his dangerous character and jealous vehemence by the qualities of discretion and wisdom, moderation and patience, forbearance and mercy.[5]

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[4] F. Loekkegaard, "A Plea for El, the Bull, and other Ugaritic Miscellanies", Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen, 1953, p. 233.

Baal, too, had universal traits, especially in the field of nature, which could be taken over by Yahveh. Thus he did not become simply the one who determined the fates of nations and men but also the one who bestowed or denied rain and fertility and whose rule was comparable to the imperceptible calm of the wind.

But most important of all were the universal traits taken over from El. A modern author is right when he declares: "El is the special contribution of Canaan to the world. He is fused with the stern God Yahveh, and thus he has become the expression of all fatherliness, being mild and stern at the same time."[6]

III

Just as Israel exchanged ideas with the Canaanite religion so also did it entertain cultural and commercial relations with the Phoenician towns (especially with Tyre), and perhaps through these, through the ruling classes of the Hittites in Palestine and through the Philistines it came into contact with the world of the Indo-Europeans. It is in the light of these facts, especially the influence of the Canaanite religion, that one can understand the universal traits of the Biblical-Israelite religion. They then exert a wider influence and are strengthened by the urge towards monotheism, that is, to the belief that there is only *one* God who is the God of the whole world and of all men.

The universal conception is, however, not a self-evident one, but again and again it has been obliged to make head against a national, particularistic conception. The assertion that God has chosen Israel alone and that He stands in a unique relationship only to it—and to no other nation—is an erroneous national belief. The prophet Amos rejects it and twists it so that he derives from it for his hearers merely God's right to destroy His disobedient and faithless Israel. The Old Testament states over and over again that God has His hand in the destiny of all nations and all men and not only in the destiny of Israel; the most one may say is that Isreal was the first nation to realize that this is the case.

So it is that the early narrators begin by describing the origin and development of mankind; the development of town culture side by side with the nomads living in tents, the appearance of the musicians and engineers side by side with the shepherds and peasants. If, in addition, they then give a survey of the peoples of the earth known at the time it is clear that they understand the history of peoples as an undivided whole. And Abrâham receives the benediction: "In you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12, 3). With this, however, the narrators concentrate on what Israel, living in a particularly close relationship to God, means for the rest of the world, even though it is to live its history for the benefit of the whole of mankind and even though the ultimate aim is to be the unification of mankind, split as it is into many national and linguistic groups. Such interlacing of universal and national or particularistic ideas is found frequently.

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[5] O. Eissfeldt, "El and Yahweh," Journal of Semitic Studies 1 (1956), pp. 36f.

[6] Loekkegaard, op. cit., p. 232.

But at the same time the purely universal conception occurs again and again, especially in the Old Testament prophets. When the Israelites cite their rescue from Egypt as proof of divine mercy Amos parries in these words:

Are you not like the Ethiopians
  to me, O people of Israel ? (says God).
Did I not bring up Israel
  from the land of Egypt,
but the Philistines from Caphtor, too,
  and the Syrians from Kir ? (Am. 9, 7)

Therefore God does not call Israel alone to account for its transgressions, but other peoples, too,—even if they have trespassed against one another and not against Israel. This is the case with, for example, Moab,

because he burned to lime
  the bones of the king of Edom. (Am. 2, 1)

God acts in a similar way through different peoples which He calls for the purpose but which He can cast aside again if they do not wish to serve Him. It is in this light that Isaiah regards the then world power Assyria:

Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger,
  the staff of my fury !
Against a godless nation I send him,
  and against the people of my wrath I command him. (Is. 10, 5)

In the same way other prophets assert that God has invested King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon or King Cyrus of Persia with world dominion (Jer. 27, 6; Is. 45, 1).

Such universal ideas are also expressed in the later period. An unknown prophet proclaims that all nations will pilgrimage to God,

That He may teach us His ways
  and that we may walk in His paths.

This will be the end of all wars:

He shall judge between the nations,
  and shall decide for many peoples;
and He shall beat their swords into ploughshares
  and their spears into pruning hooks;

> nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
> neither shall they learn war any more. (Is. 2, 2-4)

Another prophet expects that the old enemies, Egypt, Assyria and Israel will become reconciled and that they will worship God together. And then God will say:

> Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage. (Is. 19, 25)

The account of the prophet Jonah draws the practical conclusions from this. We are told how the prophet is compelled by God to call upon the Assyrian capital to repent for its sins, how God in His mercy and love forgives it and grants it the same salvation as Israel. This story in the Bible was a heavy blow to all national or particularistic ideas. Indeed, a prophet breaks all the conventions for God:

> From the rising of the sun to its setting
> my name is great among the nations,
> and in every place
> incense is offered to my name,
> and a pure offering,
> for my name is great among the nations. (Mal. 1, 11)

Finally there is the Servant of Yahveh—a prophet whose name we do not even know, but who (as his followers believed) bore the guilt of all men and died for the sinners in Israel and in the world of nations that they might live:

> Surely he has borne our sicknesses
> and carried our pains;
> yet we esteemed him stricken,
> smitten by God, and afflicted.
> But he was wounded for our transgressions,
> he was bruised for our iniquities;
> upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
> and with his stripes we are healed. (Is. 53, 4f).

In this way

> he bore the sin of many
> and made intercession for the transgressors. (Is. 53, 12)

These are the great universal ideas of the Old Testament: the solidarity and joint liability of God with all nations and all men, whose lives and destinies in nature and history, in past, present and future He directs; the solidarity and joint liability of men themselves who form a large community and know no more wars; and the solidarity and joint liability of divinely favoured Man with the others for whom he sacrifices his life and whom he reconciles with God. These ideas are still working today.

IV

However, theoretical objections and practical reproaches have been made against Christianity, in whose Bible these universal ideas are found. People have sometimes said that it is full of dogmatism and intolerance and that it fails when applied to everyday life. And the suggestion has been made that it should rediscover and develop its mystic features in order to enter into a synthesis with other similar conceptions and to form with them a universal mystic religion for all men. But would that be anything more than an artificial construction which could satisfy more than a few people ? Above all, the mystic element in the tradition of the Bible is very slight so that it is difficult to say what could really be developed.

Instead of this we can take as our starting point the stronger features of the Biblical tradition, particularly its universal ideas about which I have said a few words. According to these the situation is that God embraces every nation, class, age and person.

In addition the Old Testament faith exhibits further traits which Christendom ought to stress more and which could then bridge the gap between it and peoples of other faiths. For that Faith is not static, rigid and immobile but dynamic, alive and effective. It knows no dogma. It creates a personal communion with God, which embraces the whole of human existence. And it is not a pious feeling and yearning but it is intended to operate and prove itself in daily life.

This last point in particular is important. For it is this which decides whether we can hold our own in the test which Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount set up as a criterion of religious faith: "You will know them by their fruits" (Matth. 7, 16). To this corresponds what the monk Salvian meant in the 5th century A.D. when he said: "If our religion is good, that is not our merit, but if our life is evil the guilt is ours. It is of no avail to us that our religion is good if our life and conduct are not good. For our bad life is our own responsibility".[7]

Just as important as faith is a right life based on religion. Again universal effects can emanate from this. Just as the relationship of the West to the East in earlier centuries from the time of Alexander the Great onwards is misunderstood if one represents it simply as an attempt at imperialistic domination, and as moreover there has been mutual influence and stimulation, so, too, does this relationship operate in the practical social activity, the credit for having started which with love and charity in Hinduism is due to the Ramakrishna Mission.

In our days there is need of co-operation of all religious people in the great moral and educational, social and political tasks of mankind. Most religions proclaim the brotherhood of man and demand justice and love. It is this common basis which makes such co-operation possible. Many attempts have already been made, but we should try and begin again. Just as there is an ecumenical association of most of the Christian churches there ought also to be an ecumenical movement of religions or, even better, of religious people. Its aim cannot be the unification or relativization of religions, but rather the practical co-operation of all religious people against the common enemies of humanity: disease and poverty, tyranny and war. It is our duty to take pains on a broad basis to contribute something towards the solution of the difficult problems of our time: striving for peace, tolerance and brotherhood instead of political and ideological hate; equality instead of contempt of other races; freedom, support and education for all men. A universal effort such as this seems to me to do justice to the ideas of Biblical religion and also to the aims of Vivekananda.

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[7] Salvian, De gubernatio Dei.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MAX MULLER

Hiltrud Ruestau, *Germany*

While working as a research scholar in the Institute of Indian Studies of the Humboldt-University in Berlin on modern Indian philosophy I had to study the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda in detail. I was struck by the admiration with which he speaks about the German Orientalist Max Muller. "What an extraordinary man is Prof. Max Muller, (IV, 225)", he wrote after a visit to Max Muller on 6th July 1896. He had heard about the respect Max Muller had for Swami Vivekananda's teacher Paramahamsa Ramakrishna. This is the reason of his going to Oxford to Max Muller. Swami Vivekananda was deeply impressed and wrote to his friends: "I had a beautiful visit with Prof. Max Muller. He is a saint—a Vedantist through and through...He has been a devoted admirer of my old master for years. He has written an article on my master ... We had long talks on Indian things. I wish I had half his love for India." (VIII, 378). In an article for the journal Brahmavadin he wrote about Max Muller: "I wish I had a hundredth part of that love for my own motherland !...He has lived and moved in the world of Indian thought for fifty years or more...It has coloured his whole being...He has caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta...The jeweller alone can understand the worth of jewels." (Roll, 104/105)

He called Max Muller and Paul Deussen "...the truest friends of India and Indian thought." (IV, 220). And so my admiration for the life and work of Swami Vivekananda made me study Max Muller closer. My contribution as a German to the Swami Vivekananda Celebration is the following short remarks on Max Muller and Swami Vivekananda.

F. Max Muller was born on 6th December 1823 in Dessau (Germany). His father, Wilhelm Muller, was a teacher and librarian. He took part in battles of independence against Napoleon as a volunteer. He was a famous poet of his time. Heinrich Heine called him the most important lyricist of his time along with Goethe.

He wrote texts of many German folksongs, for example "On the well in front of the door...". The texts of the famous songs "Miller's songs" and the "Winterjourney" set to music by Schubert were written by W. Muller. Unfortunately he died at the age of 34.

Max Muller went to school in Dessau and Leipzig and then he studied in Leipzig University. Here he began to learn Sanskrit and heard lecture on Indian literature. He did his doctorate in 1843 when he was not yet 20 years old. He spent a short time in Berlin to complete his studies. He heard lectures by the philologist F. Bopp and the philosopher W. Schelling.

In the years 1845-47 he collected the manuscripts of the Rigveda and the commentary by Sayana. He went to London in 1847 to copy the manuscripts in the library of the East India Company. From this time on England became his home. It was here that the six volumes of his Rigveda appeared in the years 1849-1874. The East India Company had undertaken to finance his stay and the publication of his works. In 1859 he was offered the chair for Modern Literature and later for Comparative Philology. In 1876 he began to publish the Sacred Books of the East. The second edition of the Rigveda appeared in 1890 to 1892. Max Muller wrote a number of scientific works and won many laurels in his lifetime. Many important persons like Charles Darwin, Alexander von Humboldt, the physicist Michael Faraday and others were among his friends. He married and had 4 children.

He died on 28th of Oct. 1900, at the age of 76.

The honours given by Indians to Max Muller or Muksha Mulera, as his Indian friends sometimes called him, made him specially happy. Although the orthodox circles had in the beginning warned against the printing of the Rigveda in a foreign country, the publication of Max Muller's Rigveda was received with enthusiasm. Even today the name of Max Muller is popular everywhere in India.

In my opinion the significance of Max Muller for India lies in the extremely tiring work of collecting and copying all the valuable materials for the publication of the Rigveda. This was a great service to the Indian people. The consciousness of the rich cultural tradition was an important factor in the Indian people's fight for freedom to which Max Muller contributed in this way.

Swami Vivekananda said about the great work of Max Muller: "We Hindus certainly owe more to him than to any other Sanskrit scholar in the west..." (IV, 221)

Swami Vivekananda admired in particular the diligence with which Max Muller worked on the Rigveda. By giving the Indians the possibility to read printed texts of the Rigveda Max Muller helped them to free themselves from superstition and revert to the old way of thinking. Max Muller had originally planned to publish the Rigveda in Germany. He returned to Berlin from London to finalise the terms. With the help of Alexander von Humboldt he got a promise of financial support from the Prussian king, who like the French Government, undertook to buy a number of copies.

This plan did not materialise, because the Directors of the East India Company refused to subscribe for a hundred copies, on the ground that they were not going to support such a work carried out by a foreign country.

(s. Letters 57). And so Max Muller returned to London without achieving his goal. His friend the Prussian Ambassador in England convinced the Directors of the East India Company of the necessity of publishing the Rigveda themselves. Max Muller himself writes about it: "It was surely a mere accident that the Directors of the Old East India Company voted a large sum of money for printing the six large quarto of the Rigveda of about a thousand pages each. It was at the time when the fate of the Company hung in the balance..." (Autobiogr. 13)

The Prussian Ambassador in London, Baron von Bunsen, went after a dinner to the Chairman and the Directors of the East India Company and explained to them, what the Rigveda was, and that it would be a real disgrace if such a work like the Sacred Books of the Brahmans were published in Germany or in some other country than England, and they agreed to vote a sum of money such as they never voted before for any literary undertaking. Max Muller writes: "It was no easy task to persuade the Board of Directors—all strictly practical and commercial men—to authorise so considerable an expenditure, merely to edit and print an old book that none of them could understand." (Autobiogr. 135)

But it was no mere accident as Max Muller thinks, but the desire on the part of the Directors of the EIC to regain their lost prestige and to prolong their rule by showing their services in the field of Indian culture. With great pride they sent the 1st volume of the Rigveda to all important persons in England and India. The 2nd edition of the Rigveda, published in the years 1890 to 1892 was printed at the expense of the Maharaja of Vizianagram, whom Max Muller called a generous patriotic Prince, because the English government in India did not want to finance a further edition. Apart from that the importance of Max Muller to India lies in the fact that he drew attention towards the contents of the old Sanskrit scriptures. Swami Vivekananda remarks that the philologists were up to that time so absorbed in pure philological research that they could not appreciate the rich philosophical and religious contents of Sanskrit literature.

Max Muller on the other hand always stressed the necessity of studying Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy. In his opinion the value of Indian philosophical and religious literature lies mainly in its age. The Vedas could give us information on the origin of our languages, literary and philosophical thinking and of the development of civilisation. Apart from that all true students of philosophy could find in the Rigveda an ideology which is very important in the history of philosophy.

At the same time Max Muller also advocated the study of Indian philosophy "for the very practical object of knowing something of secret springs which determine the character, the thoughts and deeds, of the lowest as well as of the highest among the people in India,—an acquaintance with their religion, which is founded on the Vedas, and with their philosophy, which is founded on the Vedanta, is highly desirable." (India what... 250)

The ideals of Max Muller are reflected in the curriculum for the students of Indology in GDR, in which lectures on the old and new Indian philosophy have been for years an important part.

Along with this desire for a correct understanding of Indian philosophy and religion Max Muller stood for a study of modern Indian languages. Already in 1848 he delivered a lecture on the relations of Bengali to Sanskrit and other Aryan languages. He wrote a French-Bengali Grammar for which he could not find a publisher and learned Hindustani.

Max Muller who called himself a naturalized Englishman had never been to India. In his earlier years he did not have enough money for a long stay in India and he did not want to take a job in the English Civil Service or to become a missionary as he did not want to give up his independence. Later he was too old to undertake at that time the very strenuous journey. So he gained his knowledge of India mainly from the Indian classical literature, from Indians in England and from the accounts from Englishmen who had been to India. Therefore it is no wonder that in certain questions he did not have a real understanding of Indian problems and sometimes, unknowingly, he supported the interest of the English colonial government. For example, he stresses the need of studying Indian philosophy because of its political importance. He says: "In India... religion, and philosophy too, are great powers still." (India what....250) In his opinion it was necessary that the candidates for the Indian Civil Service had a knowledge of these objects. Lord Derby, the then Secretary of State for India, declared, that such scholars as Max Muller had rendered more valuable service to the Government of India than many a regiment (Autobiogr. 300). Again and again Max Muller demanded the establishment of Seminars for oriental languages in England. At that time when trade of countries like Austria, Russia and Prussia where oriental languages were taught, was making rapid progress, Max Muller saw English trade and political influence in danger and attributed it to the absence of knowledge of Indian languages among the English officials, missionaries and tradesmen. In Max Muller's opinion the reason of the great popular uprising of 1857 was a misunderstanding between the Indian population and the English rulers which arose because the latter did not understand local languages. "My chief interest lies with the ancient India" (Auld Lang Syne, VII), says Max Muller and even though he affirms that the past is nowhere so alive as in India he drew certain false conclusions regarding India of his time. For example, he regarded India ripe for Christianity and that only men like R. M. Roy and K. C. Sen were needed to Christianise India. In 1857 he still had the intention of going to India for 10 years to found an Indo-Christian Colony and to see how the "Indian priestcraft could be overthrown and the way opened for the entrance of simple Christian teaching". (Letter 182). Max Muller demands: "The natives must be taken into our confidence and allowed to take an oar in our boat. They are men like ourselves... They must be made to feel that they are in the same boat with ourselves." (Letter 378).

His stress on the equality for Indian people is important. We find this demand also put forward by Swami Vivekananda repeatedly. But in contrast to Swami Vivekananda Max Muller did not believe in the political independence for the Indian people.

He wrote to an Indian friend: "I wish there was more English feeling in India... though you know, that I am generally on the Indian side". (Letter 350). Max Muller made an attempt to understand the Indian present and he wrote: "The whole blame for the present disturbed state falls on the English settlers in India, and on the scheming politicians in England". (Letters 1962).

He repeatedly defended the Indian people, for example, against the the English slander that they were liars. At the same time he rejects all racial prejudices: "Judging from my own limited experience, I can truly say that there is behind that warm and almost Indian colours of the Aryas of India the same warm heart, the same trust as under the white skin of Europeans."

He had friendly relations with many Indians like Debendranath Tagore and K. C. Sen. We find that Swami Vivekananda and Max Muller had much in common. "A country permeated by such thoughts as were uttered by Ramakrishna cannot possibly be looked upon as a country of ignorant idolaters..."

Like Swami Vivekananda Max Muller was also against religious intolerance. Max Muller advises: "To approach every religion with respect, nay, with reverence". He was influenced by the teachings of Paramahamsa Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, that all religions are true and thus equally correct ways to God. In his article of the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago he writes "All historical religions are only variations of the eternal Religion". (Dt. Rundschau, 411, 1895). The similarity in the ways of thinking of both men is shown by one example. Swami Vivekananda put into practice the advice of Max Muller given to K. C. Sen without any knowledge of it. K. C. Sen wanted to know what kind of service should be adopted by his new church, the Brahmo Samaj. Max Muller advised: Service of God should be service of men, if you want divine service, let it be a real service, such as God would approve of...

Send some (of your friends) to the poorest streets in the city, others to the prisons, others to the hospitals... That would be a real Divine Service." K. C. Sen did not agree with Max Muller. But Swami Vivekananda put these ideas into practice. To see God in every person and to help him—that is the main ideal of the charity work done by the Ramakrishna Mission. It is no wonder, that on the basis of this spiritual unanimity Max Muller and Swami Vivekananda became good friends soon after they met. Swami Vivekananda visited Max Muller many times and the latter offered him all possible help, when he went to lecture at Oxford. They had mutual consultations on the publication of a journal. Max Muller asked Swami Vivekananda about his opinion on his article "A Real Mahatma". Swami Vivekananda gathered and supplied material to Max Muller for his book "Ramakrishna, his Life and Sayings".

This book, in its turn helped Swami Vivekananda in his lecturing tours in England and America.

Swami Vivekananda said about Max Muller: "...he is very much pleased with our movement and is ready to help it as much as he can". (VIII, 381).

Max Muller regretted very much that he could not take part in the World's Parliament on Religions in Chicago, although he attached great importance to it. By showing the relationship between Max Muller and Swami Vivekananda, I hope to have contributed to your Parliament of Religions in a small way.

INDO-JAPANESE SPIRITUAL TIES

KUMAO KANAYA, *Japan*

It is really a matter of great pleasure for me that I was invited on this august occasion to celebrate the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, the maker of Modern India and that I could meet so many Swamis and enthusiastic followers. This impressed me so deeply that I felt all the more the necessity of forging spiritual ties between the two countries in the wake of this fresh and vivid occasion.

As it is seen in every part of the world, the daily routine of the Japanese Buddhists is to wake up with Lord Buddha in the dawn of the morning and to go to rest with Him at night with gratitude for His blessings. Whereever you may go, even into the remotest village of the far-away countryside, you will never fail to find a Buddhist temple standing in the midst or in the neighbourhood of the inhabitants' houses. Whatsoever the house you may have the chance to visit, you will find a Buddhist shrine in it. This is the common aspect you may find in the Japanese life, just as I have seen the same during my trips in the south and the north of your country.

Some, however, criticise that Japan has been Americanized and that Japanese youths are much imbued with the materialist's way of thinking, having utterly given up the spiritual side of life. This is too much of exaggeration and a mere superficial way of viewing the Japanese. Man cannot live only by bread. I feel sorry for those criticizers that they overlook the latent blood bequeathed from their pious ancestors still flowing in their veins, consciously or unconsciously. Although some are now overridden by the thrills of jass and twist, one night they will awake from their dream and listen to the calling of the blood, amidst loneliness, and will look straight into the reality. It should be our burden to see to them that they may realize the meaning of life.

Spiritual ties between India and Japan date as far back as 552 AD when a small image of Buddha and several sutras were presented from a kingdom in the Korean peninsula. There were some conflicts between the followers of the indigenous religion and those of the new teaching, but, however, after Shotoku became regent, it was not long before Buddhism dominated the religious life of the Japanese.

"Revere sincerely the three treasures—Buddha, Dharma and Sangha—for these are...the supreme objects of faith in all countries" is the second article of the moral injunctions issued by Shotoku-taishi in his 17th Constitution. So we Buddhists adore and have adored him as the Mother of the Japanese Buddhism, looking up to him as the incarnation of Shree Mala in the Shree Mala Sutra.

Secondly, in the long history of Indo-Japanese spiritual ties, we have to take up the fact that Bodhisena, an Indian monk came to our country together with another monk and Futei, a Cambodian musician at the invitation of the Japanese Imperial Envoy. In A.D. 736 they were received with great honour by the Imperial messenger, the Chief Priest accompanied by a hundred others, masters of ceremonies, musicians and high dignitaries of foreign office.

Bodhisena found that Buddhism and Sanskrit language were already well established in Japan and carried on conversation with the Japanese Buddhists in Sanskrit. In A.D. 750 he was appointed the head of the Buddhist Order in Japan and taught Sanskrit and Mahayana doctrine in the different monasteries. He died in 760 and a stupa was erected over his remains.

Futei, a Cambodian musician, who came with Bodhisena to Japan gave lessons and demonstrations in Indian music and dance in Nara. The Indian system of seven musical notes was highly admired both in religious assemblies and at the Imperial court.

Very recently, only three years back, Members of Japan India Cultural Society, Kansai, together with the then Indian Consul Mr. P. L. Bhalla and Indian residents paid homage to his stupa within the precincts of Ryozenji Temple in Nara. We were led by the Chief Priest of that Temple, amidst rain, to a hill. There we paid the greatest respect for his contributions to the development of the Japanese Buddhism and culture.

There has been a long vicissitude of the Japanese Buddhism in our history. Its great contribution for the development of the Japanese culture can hardly be overestimated in every field of life, not only in philosophy, logic, the rudiments of psychology and natural science, but highly developed agriculture and engineering techniques.

Among all the various sects of Buddhism, Jodo Shin and Zen are the most popular, because of their simplicity of doctrines; the former having spread among common people, while the latter has influenced the warrior-class and intelligentzia.

Whatsoever religion one may profess, the most important thing is whether or not one has had the experience of immersion in the Absolute. Swami Vivekananda is said to have been immersed in Brahman at the southernmost point of the peninsula of the sub-continent when he stood there. With the momentum of this, his great works were set in and went on up to the last of his breath. There is the way putting stress on Jnana, there is the way of Karma and there is the way of Bhakti. So it is in Buddhism. Zen emphasizes on the transmitting of Buddha's mind directly to the mind of the believers;

it holds that enlightenment can only come by intuitive thought. Sacred formulae, faith in a saviour and personal effort to understand the meaning of the universe have no place in Zen. What is required is an immediate aesthetic perception of reality. Zen teachings include recommendations regarding proper posture for meditation and elaborate rules for disciplining the mind, but these are only designed to facilitate a kind of mystical self-intoxication through which one may escape consciousness of the self and all individual existence and enter into a feeling of oneness with reality. Zen contributed much to architecture, literature, painting, manners, dramas and dancing of Japan. The celebrated No-play and the popular tea-ceremony were introduced by Zen. Aesthetic enjoyment of a highly refined nature is the characteristic of all Zen devotees.

As for the Jodo Shin which is the most popular sect of Buddhism, the faith is the most important. Belief in the Amida's sacred name is sufficient to assure salvation. In the invocation there is sufficient merit of rebirth in the "Pure Land". When man attains this faith, his repetition of Nembutsu is prompted only by gratitude to Amida for salvation and the power to exercise this faith is Amida's gift and is not native to man, therefore gratitude to Amida is man's main concern. This school also taught that, although assurance of salvation can be given in this life, and enlightenment is attained in Pure Land after death and that, after rebirth in the Pure Land, one can voluntarily return to this world in order to engage in the work of a Buddha to help humanity in its spiritual progress.

Real culture can only be made progressive after the transformation from selfish ego into selflessness immersed in the Infinite.

It will be interesting to analyze several phrases in Japanese daily life to know how deeply the teachings of Buddhism have so far influenced and penetrated into Japanese life. Let me, for instance, pick up the most popular phrase "Arigato Gozaimasu"—the phrase when we express our thanks to others.

Arigato means "Thank you" in English or "Danke sienen" in German and "Dhaniwad" in your tongue. Now let us think of this phrase in its original meaning, then you will find the unique way of expressing gratitude under Buddhistic influence. Arigato comes from Aritatai desu: Aru+Gatai meaning Aru "to be thus" and Gatai "thus not to be". Therefore "to be thus" cannot be "thus to be", is the meaning of this phrase. In other words, whatever things or matter happen to me is really the one gifted by the Infinite. The common way of thinking to give and take is negated into the rare chance to have been given by the Unseen and we express our gratitude to the causes and concurrence of relations and circumstances caused me to come across, thus I thank, not only the very person who gives me such a chance, but all the causes and concurrences bringing forth the effect. "Thus it is" is the fact I am now able to enjoy due to the concurrence of relations and circumstances, therefore it would have been possible "not to be thus". In spite of this, I came across such and such concurrence of relations and circumstances. Naturally it is a matter of rarity to be placed in such relations and circumstances; therefore I express my gratitude to all the concurrence of relations and circumstances, especially to the blessings of Lord Buddha.

This must sound quite complicated, but however, it is only possible for us to know reality when ego is completely negated and the Infinite itself is also negated to be dynamic manifestation of the Infinite.

Swami Vivekananda saw the manifestation of the Absolute in the daily common occurrences that happened around him. The day before yesterday I met a gentleman named Mr. M. M. Sur, who told me, "Indians greet each other saying "Namastey" meaning "I surrender to the manifestation of the Infinite in you." What a wonderful word your countrymen have !

Cultural ties must be based on spiritual ties, otherwise they are not endurable. The former can only be assured and matured into the flowering by the latter.

Swami Vivekananda was a great spiritual man, a great soul whose life brought forth the light not only to India, but to the world, whose teachings will be the light to the present world to lead us to the unity of humanity, thus bringing forth peace and harmony.

CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM: COMMON GROUNDS FOR A DIALOGUE

PROF. JOHN NOSCO

Columbia University, U.S.A. (now at Banaras H.U.)

Mr. President, Fellow Delegates, Brothers & Sisters:

A new word has entered the theological arena with an unequalled power, intensity and persuasion. This word is the "dialogue". In a subtle way which sometimes acquires even the quality of a frank, direct, critical two-way communication—it is opening to us new visions of not-so-utopian a possibility of oneness as it may have been thought of only some fifteen years ago. In this new atmosphere, Christianity and Hinduism are given an opportunity for re-examination of their respective positions for the purpose of establishing a meeting ground for exchange of ideas and for appreciation of each other's striving toward the ultimate goal of human life which is understood to be in terms of the reaching of the very proximity of God. This task is not only theologically conditioned in our belief that we are all children of God, or that our souls are potentially divine, but also in our philosophical ontological axiom that all that is, ultimately shall return to its primal, pristine quality, which is termed in the New Testament as "Apokatastasis panton" or "The restitution of all things", in the order of which we dare to count "man" as being first in this potentiality. Here a Hindu, in search of "Moksha" or "liberation" hopes to achieve final unity, or at least, communion with the ultimate Reality, with the Satchidananda, while a Christian likewise hopes, by the grace of God, to take off his mortality and clothe himself into immortality, to live with his God in eternal felicity. I feel confident that Swami Vivekananda, if he were to view over our present-day condition, would tend to agree with us all that the time has come when the old cliches should be put aside as tarnished and outworn, even if they still may be obstinately nurtured by those, who in their fear of placing their feet at the broad foundation of God's continuous creation, prefer to occupy the narrowest stand with the most limited horizon of universal, divine activity. Theirs seems to be the aspiration for a solely vertical course of personal destiny and the fact of the oneness of human family under one common God seems acceptable to them provided that the God is the One known by the name they, or their spiritual ancestors, have given Him.

And yet, there are common grounds, or points for creative exchange where Christians and Hindus can stand, talk to each other in terms religious and discover that they can understand each other. Naturally, the old, degrading Chirstian cliché of "Heathenism" or Paganism as referring to the Hindus,—and the Indian, ill-perceived cliché of "materialism" or non-spirituality as referring to the Christians, especially to the Americans, have no constructive function to play in this dialogue, because they have nothing in truth to say about those qualities which fill the hearts and the dreams of both the Christians and the Hindus. As I have, thus far, travelled up and down the seemingly endless distances of India and seen millions of people striving, often by superhuman labour and with substandard earnings, to improve their material condition, which indeed is not very conducive to spiritual growth, I have seen many evidences of life lived in simple spirituality which, however, is not detached from concerns for possible material acquisitions, and I know Christians in the West, in general, and American Christians in particular, and I cannot say that wealth, or abundance of material goods and of gadgets of all kinds, are by their very nature, breeding sources for a theism, for non-spirituality or for self-subjection to this worldly, materialistic slavery. As has been recently observed by Prof. Moore of Hawaii, the death of our President, John F. Kennedy, has simply demonstrated on which side America stands in relation to God, when people almost without exception bowed their heads and prayed to God and filled the churches and asked even others to pray for them in that hour of sorrow and national loss. This was not a sign of materialism, or godlessness or this-worldliness. So, we may say that there is a deep spirituality to be found on both sides just as there is a degree of materialistic attachment and this-worldly aspiration to be discerned both in the East and in the West, but these are not inherently harmful to the religious understanding and hope of either Christianity or Hinduism. They both, in practice, have their approach to God determined by their respective concepts of the Supreme Being. The Hindu nirguna Brahman of advaita Vedanta would command as much, or one might say as little, love and devotion as would Paul Tillich's concept of God beyond God. But, Ramanuja's concept of personal Ishwara, or still more the Vaishnavic conception of the Preserver who tends time and again through the endless reaches of time to visit, bless and guide humanity in the incarnate form of an Avatar, Jesus being one in this broad-minded approach and understanding, all this brings us very close to the Christian concept of God of concern and love Who is bending down to man's condition and is giving His Son Incarnate for the redemption of all. And if one tries to break this general resemblance into smaller categories and considers Christianity in its Roman Catholic and Protestant branches, he can proceed still further and see, especially in regard to soteriology, the synergism of Roman Catholicism expressed in the "monkey theory" of one school of the Bhagavattas, while the Protestant "Sola fide, Sola

Gratia" principle is reflected in the "cat theory" of salvation of another school of the Bhagavattas.

On the question of toleration, it must be said that Hinduism has generally been more inclined toward tolerance of other creeds, including Christianity, than Christianity has ever been. On this point, Christianity will have to learn from Hinduism by acknowledging that while it has right to consider its own position as unique among the world's religions it has no right whatsoever to limit the operations, the scope of omnipotence and the love of God to only Christianity, and to leave for its God in relation to the rest of humanity, including the Hindus, only His work and ultimate, eternal condemnation for their "unbelief". For as God is the source and ultimate goal of all, His dominion is universal and the ways that lead to Him are not theologian-made ways, but God's. It is the heart and the soul of man, standing in reverence and humility before God, which are known and seen by God, rather than the tailor-made ritual and formalism, devised sometimes by man's intellect, at other times by his fancy. And this is equally true of Christianity as of Hinduism.

Both the Hindu and the Christian are being admonished that they must be reborn "from above" so as to give place to the spirit of God to lead and to motivate their steps toward a true "purity of heart", in which process one should not attempt to make a merchant of God who sells salvation, for "to action alone has one right, not to the fruits thereof", as the Bhagavad Gita says or "Ask nothing, want nothing in return," as Swami Vivekananda advised, or as we read in the Christian New Testament, "Then what becomes of our boastings ? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works ? No, but on the principle of faith. For we hold that a *man is justified by faith apart from works of law*". And this God is the God of all. "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of gentiles also? Yes, of gentiles also, since God is one, and he will justify the circumcized on the ground *of their faith* and the uncircumcised *because of their faith*". In these words, there is a clear expression in the very Christian scriptures of the divine redemptive concern which goes clearly beyond the dogmatic position of him who truly believes in God in the spirit of devotion, and expects the tenet of divine grace to rest upon him. Hindu "bhakti" or devotion, and Christian concept of grace both express a profound spiritual awareness of the need for appreciation of the gift of divine grace on the part of the devotee.

Truth is another principle which may constitute a point of contact and imaginative approach between a Hindu and a Christian. Christianity is urged by Jesus to know the truth, by which knowledge a man should be made free. Truth, in this statement is clearly identified with the Divine. In God, there is only the truth, for God is the Truth Itself. This truth is unchangeable, for it is the very essence of Him that He is perfect and as such, would exclude any notion that would tend to suggest that He might be less than the fullest Truth. In Hinduism, the very same quality of the Ultimate Reality is emphasized. This truth about God, or this very nature of God, can be revealed to man through a mystical experience when one intuitively perceives the very essence of the Ultimate Reality. Having had this experience, a Hindu can only feel the existential oneness of his Self with the Self of God, a truth beyond all human truths, beyond all man's categories of thinking and expression, the truth of a new birth in which "Old things pass away, and all is made new". And this is exactly what a Christian is seeking to find in his life as well, and again we joyously return to our starting word, "The dialogue". In its vibrations we do not necessarily see any form of unfeeling callousness, or sophistic rationalism. Rather, it is radiating waves of warmth and of a new spirit, in which one's own position is being re-examined and seen in the broader light as a contributory part of the all-related human family in the strength and love of God. In this lies the task of Hinduism and Christianity in this day and in the days to come, that having love for our own respective religious persuasions, we also have an understanding and sincere appreciation for some one else's desire, ways and means which have been found conducive to the establishment of a union with the Ultimate Reality by one side, or the other. For these are the steps that will turn our hearts from the basic variations and point to the truly possible and realizable degree of harmony and brotherly communion. Then, both Christians and Hindus will be able to join in Augustine penitential confession, "Thou hast created us, O God, for Thyself, and restless are our souls until they find their rest in Thee."

CHAPTER III

"NĀTMAVIT"

Dr. Roma Chaudhuri
Calcutta

The lazy, slumbering world had, then, just opened its eyes and started smiling with the gleeful, golden rays of the just arisen sun, when Nārada, the restless, roving ambassador of the Heaven and the earth, came rushing at the feet of Sanatkumāra with folded hands, and in a voice, choked with emotion, yet steady and sweet, said:

"Teach me, O revered Sir ! Instruct me." (*Chāndogya-Upaniṣad 7.1.1.*)

Startled, the great sage looked up: Nārada ? The celebrated fount of wisdom Nārada, the proud and aggressive Nārada speaking in this humble way ? Cautiously, he replied:

"First, tell me what you already know; then, I shall tell you something more." (*op. cit.*)

With a disarming frankness, Nārada said:

"Sir, I know as many as twenty lores—I know all the *Vedas;* all the *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, Mathematics, Grammar, Astronomy, Archery, Ethics, and what not."

"But, then, why are you perturbed, why grieved ?"

Yes, why am I perturbed, why grieved ? Why ? Why ? Why ? Can these not make me really strong, really successful, really satisfied, these great and good *Śāstras*; these grand and glorious *Vidyās*; these glamorous and glittering *Tattvas* ?

No, these cannot. Do you not see that these cannot ? Do you not see that these have made me a mere prattling parrot, repeating everything *verbatim*, yet absolutely mechanically; a mere tenacious treasure-trove, storing invaluable gems, yet for ever plunged in the darkness of a dead dungeon; a mere hectic hot-house of foreign flowers, with nothing to call its own ? Do you not see all these, and, why I am so perturbed, so perplexed, so paralysed ?

Do you not see that—

"*So'ham Bhagavo Mantravidevāsmi, Nātmabvit.*" (*Chānd. Up. 7.1.3.*)

"Though I am, Sir, so much learned, I am only a *Mantravit*, not an *Ātmavit*—only a reciter of mere formulae, not a knower of the Self."

What then ?

Only this:

"I have heard from revered persons like you that an *Ātmavit* crosses over sorrows. I am sorrowing. Make me, revered Sir, cross over sorrows." (*Chānd. Up. 7.1.3.*)

"*So'ham Bhagavah Socami, Tam Mā Bhāgavāñchokasya Paraṁ Tarayitviti.*"

"I am sorrowing. Make me, revered Sir, cross over sorrows,"—is that not the cry of the agonised soul even to-day, more pathetic than ever, more pronounced than ever, more pressing than ever ?

But why ? Simply because, we are moving more and more away from our own selves; simply because, we are driving more and more towards the non-selves; simply because, we are craving more and more for mere non-entities, for mere empty bubbles, for mere baseless mirages. Such is the destiny of our modern, scientific, much too bold, much too bombastic, much too bubbling age !

Now, what is the Reality here, as distinct from appearance; what is the Truth here, as distinct from falsity? What is the fact here, as distinct from fiction ?

That is one, and only one thing—the *Ātman*, the Soul, the Self.

The *Ātman* ? But what are its proofs; what its characteristics ?

Proofs are our own Selves. For, how can the Self be ever denied ? Is not the very denial of the Self due to the Self itself, definitely proving the existence of the Self itself ? This is an old and a well-known argument, made widely known in Western Philosophy by the celebrated philosopher Descartes, generally taken to be the father of Modern European Philosophy, through his profound formula: "Cogito Ergo Sum": "I think, therefore, I am".

But our argument, our Indian argument is not only this, but more, much more. That is, it is not a mere negative argument to the effect that the Self cannot be denied; and only for that reason, it has to be accepted as real. But it is also a positive argument to the effect that the Self is constantly, completely, correctly felt to be existing; and, for that reason, it has to be accepted as real.

This, indeed, is an incontrovertible fact—this fact of the eternal existence of the Self. In the celebrated Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad, there is an exhilarating Mantra to this effect—

"*Ātmaivedamagra Āsit Puruṣavidhah, So'nuviksa Nanyadatmano'paśyat, So'hamasmityagre Vyāharat, Tato'ham Nāmābhvat.*" (*Bṛh. Up. 1.4.1.*)

"The Self alone was in the beginning, like a Person. He looked around, and found none else but Himself. He said in the beginning: 'I am'. Hence there arose the name 'I'."

This "*Ahamasmīti*"; "I am"—is the first fact of experience. From the highest to the lowest, from the wisest to the most ignorant, from children to adults, from civilised persons to savages, every one, every one without distinction, every one without exception is conscious of something in him or her, that is eternal, that is direct, that is full. Thus, everything else is changing cosmically, the world is changing; physiologically, the body is changing; psychologically, the mind is changing. But there is *something*, something in every one of us that is not changing. What is that *eternal* something ? Again, everything else is *indirect*—the world is indirect, the body is indirect, the mind is indirect—for, do we not feel that these are not we; these come into relation with us only through something that is immediately with us. What is that *direct* something ? Again, everything else is partial, incomplete, onesided, only an infinitesimal portion of this vast and variegated world comes into our views at a time—even the body and the mind are by nature successive in their states, held together by something universal. What is that *full* something ?

The only answer is: *Ātman*—which is neither the body, nor even the mind; but something *more*, something *over and above*, something *beyond*. It is in this unique sense of '*moreness*', it is in this univocal sense of '*aboveness*', it is in this unanimous sense of '*beyondness*', that lies the sense of the Self. And, who can even deny that such a unique sense of '*moreness*', such a univocal sense of '*aboveness*', such a unanimous sense of '*beyondness*' are found in all, in all without any distinction of any kind whatsoever ?

And, such is the Self, such is life, such is Humanity ! How beautifully does the revered Kathopaniṣad say:—

"*Urdhamulo'vacśākha Eṣo'*
Aśvatthvaḥ Sanātanaḥ
Tadeva Sukṣam Tat Brahma
Tadevamṛtamuchyate." (*Katha. Up. 6.1.*)
With roots upwards, and branches downwards
Stands this banyan eternal.
The root is bright, or Brahman full of light,
That is called Nectar Immortal."

In exactly the same manner, life, too, appears to be grounded on the world; but, really, it always floats above, with its roots upwards, stretching out towards *Anantatva*, towards *Bhumātva*, towards *Pūrnatva*—towards Infinity, towards Vastness, towards Fulness.

And, such is Humanity:—a wonderful commingling, a unique conglomeration, a peerless communion of 'this' and 'that', 'here' and 'there' 'now' and 'then'—where 'this' is transformed into 'that', 'here' into 'there', 'now' into 'then'. Such is the dauntless, relentless march of Humanity from Dust to Divinity, from Matter to Immortality; from Sorrow to Serenity, from Bondage to Beatitude. And, such is the incontrovertible proof of the "*Self*". For, if there were only Dust, only Matter, only Sorrow, only Bondage, this divine discontent, this immortal urge, this beatific vision would never have been possible.

See, the sun is, day after day, shining on; the river is, day after day, flowing on; the wind is, day after day, blowing on, without break, without fatigue, without protest. Why ? Because, it is their very nature, it is their very essence, it is their very existence. In the very same manner, the sun of our lives must shine forth, dispelling the gloom of Ignorance; the rivers of our lives must flow on, fertilising the barrenness of Ignobleness, the winds of our lives must blow around, sweeping away the garbages of Indolence. As well-known, the three main psychological sides of our lives are those of Thinking, Feeling, Willing; and, from these three sides, our greatest enemies are: Ignorance, Ignobleness, Indolence; and, these have to be conquered. But, are they ? They are; and, our struggle is not stopped till they are. And, such is the incontrovertible proof of the "*Self.*" For, if there were only the present and not the beyond; only the actual, and not the possible; only the visible, and not the realisable, how can the gloom, how can the barrenness, how can the garbage be ever got rid of ? But that they are, are facts of experience, incontrovertible facts of experience, indubitable facts of experience. So, the "Self" exists.

But how ? Here we hear something absolutely thrilling, absolutely inspiring, absolutely exhilarating

"*Ayamātmā Brahman*" (*Bṛh. Up. 4.4.5.*)
"This Self is Brahman".

The Self exists, not as a body, nor even as a mind, but as a Spirit; not only that, as the Supreme Spirit Itself.

But, what a bold assertion, what an illimitably daring assertion; and proof ?

Proof, as everywhere else, more so here, lies in the fact itself, in the Ātman itself, in Brahman Himself.

And, herein lies the only basis of the essential unity of all Religions. For what, after all, is Religion ? It is nothing more, nothing less than the fullest manifestation of the Ātman inside, of its infinite beauty, incomparable bliss, indescribable benignity. So, if the Ātman be the same, how can Religion, its reflections, its reverberations, its representations be different ?

In fact, the main modern malady has been beautifully expressed in that touching Mantra, quoted in the beginning—

"Nātmavit"

"I am not a knower of the Self.'

I am trying to know many things; proudly and confidently, I am trying to catch the moon and soar beyond the infinite horizons of the Heavens. But, alas, do I ever care just to turn aside and look inside, inside my own Self ? No; and, thus the greatest thing in us is receiving only the scantiest attention—with what result ? Just look around and see, see the greatest tragedy of our Scientific Age, an Age resplendent with phenomenal successes, yet always frustrated, always frightened, always fretting !

But this is what is apprehended—for this is nothing else but going against one's own nature, violating one's own rules, ignoring one's own essence. Can you stop the sun from rising; can you stop the wind from blowing; can you stop a river from flowing; can you stop a flower from blooming ? Can you, in short, deny your own Self, and obstinately identify yourself with something else ?

No, you cannot, never ! Many in their foolishness, many more in their ignorance, have tried to do so—but in vain.

So, let us be wiser now, and, for ever, give up this meaningless attempt; and recognise the ever-present Ātman, the everpure Ātman, the ever-peaceful Ātman in us. What reason, then, there would be more for any discord, or distress ?

"If there is one common doctrine that runs through all our apparently fighting and contradictory sects, it is that all glory, power and purity are within the Soul already. All admit the truth that the power is there—potential or manifest, it is there—and the sooner you believe that, the better for you." (Swami Vivekananda, III. 284.)

What better remedy can there ever be for World-maladies ?

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE FUTURE OF INDIA

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Sister Christine, an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda, said that when the Swami would utter the five-letter word 'India', there would be such deep pathos in his voice that whosoever was near him would catch the contagion of his love for that sacred land. When Swami Vivekananda returned to India, after preaching in the West for more than three years, he was asked by some one what he felt about India after his stay in Western countries. He said, "I loved India intensely before I went to the West, now the very dust of India is sacred to me." That was at a time when many of those who would go to the West would be caught in the glamour of its way of life, develop a critical attitude toward India like a supercilious Westerner, and become a greater stranger to India than any foreigner. But Swami Vivekananda's case was altogether different. His love for India was deep before he left the shores of India and he returned with greater love and veneration for his motherland. Once he said that his greatest weakness was his love for India. If it was a weakness, it was a blessed weakness. There is hardly anyone found in the religious history of the world who had so much love for his country and people side by side with his love for God.

How and why could a man of God have a special feeling for a particular land ? Can nationalism and the highest religion go together ? Does not nationalism put limitations on the fullest scope of religion ? A man of God in his highest experience lives in the superconscious state. At that time the external world does not exist for him, just as one is not conscious of the earthly existence when one is in deep sleep. When the mind of the man of God comes down to the plane of human consciousness, the only thought that arises in him is for the good of the world and the only feeling that is found in him is compassion for all mankind without any distinction whatsoever. That thought and feeling expresses itself in terms of his immediate surroundings. It does not mean, however, that his love and compassion is limited by any geographical boundary.

Swami Vivekananda's love for India was a part of his love for the whole world. He thought that India will do immense spiritual good to the whole world, just as the Western countries are in a position to fulfil the material needs of man. Once he very freely and clearly expressed this feeling when he wrote: "Shall India die ? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct; all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force and competition its ceremonies; and the human soul as its sacrifice."[1]

In Swami Vivekananda we find the same concern for the West when he was there. He was painfully conscious of the dreadful catastrophe toward which the civilization of the West was heading. The whole of Western civilization rests on a volcano which may burst at any moment and destroy the whole world, was the anxiety of the Swami even at the turn of the last century.

At times he was very perturbed by the sight of miseries in the world as a whole. In a letter to Sister Nivedita—at that time Miss Margaret Noble—he wrote from London: "Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like a thunderbolt.

"...The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep ? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life ? What greater work ? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only say, awake, awake !"[2]

So we find that Swami Vivekananda was in different moods at different times—though in each mood he was very, very great. With all his love for his country, once he wrote in a letter, "What is India, or, for the matter of that, any particular country to me ? Truth is my god, the whole universe is my religion. I am the servant of that god whom the ignorant call MAN." This exalted state was the real home of his mind. By bringing down his mind from this state to a lower plane it was that he acted and spoke for the good of all.

Swami Vivekananda's vision of India was not that of a geographical area, but of a spiritual ideal which India represented, though undoubtedly his love for India directed him to the immediate problems of the material existence of her people, groaning under foreign rule and its consequent evils. With him the real India was the India of Rishis, of seers and sages who saw the truth face to face and called one and all to the realization of the same eternal verity.

This was not a case of worshipping the past, but of getting inspiration from the past. If there were sages in the past, they will be in the present, they will be in the future, he proclaimed in a clarion voice. From that standpoint, the present situation in India is not a state of degradation but of tired sleep from which she should be awakened. To quote his own words from notes of a contemplated book which he somehow never wrote, "We all hear so much about the degradation of India. There was a time when I also believed in it. But today standing on the vantage-ground of experience, I confess, in all humility, that I was wrong... I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps—my Motherland—to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God."[3]

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[1] Complete Works, Vol. IV, p. 294.
[2] Complete Works, Vol. VII, p. 432

Swami Vivekananda was a deep student of Indian history. He had not only an intellectual understanding of history, but also great historical insight. History is not only a succession of dynasties, rulers, or the rising and falling of political powers; the real history of a country is the record of the thought processes, the ideas and ideals of the people of that country. From that standpoint India has always been vigorous, keeping alive her spiritual treasures. There have been invasions and conquests of different parts of India, there have been foreign rulers, but their influence was chiefly in the capital towns and their environs. The people in general followed their own tenor of life, pursued their own ways of thinking and struggled for the goal for which their forefathers strove. The soul of India was untouched, the heart of the country was unaffected. Whenever an attempt had been made to force an alien culture on the people, India had assimilated that culture and as such inevitably been a gainer rather than a loser. That process was perceptible even under greatly trying political conditions.

Who did the actual work and who were the instruments of that process of assimilation ? It was the spiritual leaders, the saints and sages who protected the soul of India and kept the people from going astray. When the Greeks invaded, there was the glorious period of Buddhism in India—Buddhism which was ultimately absorbed in Hinduism. During the long period of Mahommedan rule, there arose many saints who held great sway over the masses, and protected their faiths. Some of these saints had devoted followers amongst both the Hindus and the Mahommedans and thus were connecting bridges between the two religious communities. The greatest of the Mahommedan rulers, Akbar, went out of his way to meet some of the Hindu saints who were quite insignificant from a political standpoint, but nevertheless wielded great spiritual power and influence. More interestingly, some of these saints were lowly born and had no social position at all before their spiritual unfoldment.

Similar things happened in recent times under the British rule. With the British occupation came an invasion of Western civilization to India.

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[3] Complete Works, Vol. IV., p. 260

The aim of the English rulers at a time was to "civilize" or make Indians English in thought, manners, culture and religion. The real resistance to this was made not in the political field, but in the religious and cultural field. The Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, Theosophy (though not indigenous and working in a different way), stood for the preservation of the spirit of India. Afterwards came Sri Ramakrishna, born in an orthodox family, completely untouched by modern thought. He represented the wisdom of Ancient India, but made that ancient wisdom a living reality in this age through his personal realisations. From these realisations came the power which opened the eyes of vacillating Indians, blinded to the value and grandeur of the Sanatan Dharma of India. The result was a restoration of the spiritual confidence of the people from which came the national awakening that has made India politically free. In this, Swami Vivekananda, with his combination of high spiritual attainments, fiery conviction and stupendous vigour, played a great part.

Swami Vivekananda had great vision, but he was not a visionary. While dreaming of high ideals, he did not lose sight of the immediate needs. India's soul was all right, but what about her body ? Wandering as a monk from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, he came in contact with the grim poverty and suffering of the people, which made him miserable. India must be fed, education must be spread amongst the people. Take care of these things, and the sleeping leviathan, that is, India, will awaken. This was the burden of his thought. Here also he wanted to harness the forces of religion to the service of the nation. His solution was to serve the poor, the sick, the uneducated as images of God. A human form was the best temple—the best place of worship. Leaving the suffering human beings, where do you seek God ? Service to the people, in his message, was not humanitarian work, but actual worship of God. This was an old truth couched in new language, and the words uttered by him carried astonishing strength and power. He got an immediate response from the people, which became greater and greater, and now the number of persons in India imbued with the ideas of Swami Vivekananda can be counted in millions.

Though Swami Vivekananda did not take part in politics and strictly kept the organization founded by him away from politics, he keenly felt the miseries of subjection under a foreign rule and he prophesied that India would have independence in a strange and unexpected way. Indeed India has won political freedom in a unique way. Now, after independence, things in India have changed. No longer can one blame foreign rule for not doing what is necessary for the development of the country. All responsibilities are on us. As such, a gigantic task is before India; i.e., to bring the material condition of the nation to a healthy, normal level. For this, not only hard work but also dedicated spirits are required. Without an attitude of dedication to the cause of the country and the people, there will appear laziness, the desire for comfort and luxury, and, worst of all, corruption.

Religion is dedication, and dedication comes from religion. One cannot long maintain an unselfish spirit of work without genuine love for God or some high spiritual idealism. And that has to be nurtured, cultivated and constantly watched lest it become tainted. Do we not find many sad instances of persons who start life with high ideals of serving the country, and end up as gross, self-seeking opportunists ? One cannot, however, blame them. That is human nature. To keep oneself from succumbing to the snares of selfishness, an intensely prayerful attitude is necessary. One who has succeeded in doing that will be able to do the work of a hundred persons and inspire many, many hundreds.

Swami Vivekananda said that three things are necessary to be a true patriot: (1) Genuine sympathy for the people; (2) A keen mind to find out and plan the methods of work; (3) A dogged determination to continue the work against even overwhelming difficulties. Very few persons are born with these qualities to a sufficient degree. They have to be cultivated with unceasing vigilance, daily introspection and supply of strength through prayers and meditation. If we have not or cannot create a succession of such workers, the progress of the country will be delayed—perhaps sadly delayed for a very long time.

Swami Vivekananda's idea was: Make India the Motherland your God, and service to the country a part of your religion. He, a man of God, brought his mind down to the mundane problems of India, to raise the work and workers in the cause of India to a high spiritual level. For only in that case can progress be steady and workers sure of themselves.

Besides, nationalism without having any higher motive than material comforts and existence brings disaster to a country and the world. The present situation in the world is a clear illustration of this fact. Within each country there is a fight between different parties and interests; internationally there is bitter hostility among different nations till the world is on the brink of annihilation. Nationalism, instead of being a laudable virtue, has become a disease. In the name of nationalism people behave like savage beasts, or even worse. Swami Vivekananda's idea of Indian nationalism was different. India should work and develop peacefully and bring peace to the whole world. That was his message to India.

To do that requires workers and leaders who should be morally invulnerable and spiritually strong. Only such individuals will be able to lead the country to its destined goal. The immediate necessity is to remove poverty and solve the problems of health and illiteracy; the ultimate aim is to develop the spiritual stature of the people. But the method cannot be dissociated from the goal. The method must bear the marks of the goal. When the workers have no scruples or integrity, the seeds of disaster and destruction are sown at the very beginning. This should be very carefully remembered, at a time when India, after independence, is beginning a new chapter in her history.

Swami Vivekananda's idea of religion was quite different from what is noticed in the prevalent orthodoxy in India. Though he repeatedly said that the soul of India is in religion, he vehemently denounced many forms of orthodoxy in Hinduism. He made a distinction between the eternal principles of religion and the customs and social usages that grow around them. Forms of religion change with the passage of time to suit varying needs in different periods of history, but the eternal principles remain the same. Forms and customs must have the inherent power to adapt themselves to different situations. When religious life is at a low ebb, forms become rigid, and people are excessively preoccupied with forms, ignoring the spirit. From that standpoint he would rebuke people, saying: "Is there any religion in India ? For two thousand years you have been discussing the momentous problem whether you will eat with your right hand or the left. All your religion has gone to the kitchen !" His definition of religion was: Whatever gives you strength is religion. Whatever makes you weak is irreligion. The real strength comes from the knowledge of the Self, from the realization that the soul within is birthless, deathless, omniscient, and omnipotent, that man is inherently divine—everyone, even the most diabolical one. In the virtuous man that divinity has more fully manifested, in the wicked one the light of divinity is veiled by the darkness of ignorance. That darkness will go as soon as the light of knowledge comes in, and that may come at any moment under proper conditions. So no man is basically a sinner. A sinner is a saint in disguise. So for each this idea of divinity in man must be reiterated time and again: "Oh, hear ye all, Thou art divine, Thou art the Infinite !" Repeat it again and again till the Divinity manifests itself within you all.

Addressing those who want to live an intense spiritual life, Swami Vivekananda said:

"The mind should always go towards God. No other things have any right to withhold it. It should continuously think of God, though this is a very hard task; yet it can be done by persistent practice. What we are now, is the result of our past practice. Again, practice makes us what we shall be. So practice the other way; one sort of turning round has brought us this way, turn the other way and get out of it as soon as you can. Thinking of the senses has brought us down here, to cry one moment, to rejoice the next, to be at the mercy of every breeze, slave to everything. This is shameful, and yet we call ourselves spirits. Go the other way, think of God; let the mind not think of any physical or mental enjoyment, but of God alone."[4]

Surely such a high ideal can be practised only by a very few in any nation. But these few will be the salt of the nation. These few will be able to raise the standard of the spiritual life of the nation to a very high level. They will be the examples by which others will judge what is right and what is wrong; what to do or what not to do and how. They will be the conscience of the whole nation. The whole trouble with the present world is that it has no conscience. The leaders of the world say one thing and do another. They talk loudly of peace and prepare feverishly for war. They talk of high ideals in peace conferences and immediately after, make plans for the exploitation of the weaker or handicapped races and nations. Ideals are mere words; they are very easily guillotined on the scaffold of practicality. Very few are ready to sacrifice their vested interests. Such being the situation, if there be one honest man, he becomes the light of the world. If one has sincerity, coupled with idealism, one is sure to realize truth. And truth is power.

Because India has a continuous tradition of high spiritual ideals, Swami Vivekananda hoped that India would supply such persons to the world. His vision will come true, if India can solve her present and immediate material problems and that through dedicated workers with spiritual ideals in front of their eyes. Dedicated workers will create an elevating atmosphere and this atmosphere will inspire people with the spirit of dedication. Though the problems before India seem to be very immense, they will not be too difficult to solve if people can work with right understanding and the proper attitude.

Swami Vivekananda's vision was of a prosperous India with education spread amongst even the lowest and poorest, life tuned to the highest ideal, producing saints and men of God in increasing numbers. At present too high ideals are thrust on people who are not ready, because of uncultivated minds due to their abject poverty. With economic prosperity and widespread education, larger and larger numbers of people will be able to devote their time and energy to the pursuit of spiritual truths. The result is naturally bound to be greater spiritual strength to the nation and more favorable spiritual atmosphere in the land. If such a condition can be brought about in India—and Swami Vivekananda was sure it could be—India will be able to contribute to the peace and real welfare of the whole world. That was the charge left behind by Swami Vivekananda to his followers, admirers and to his countrymen in general.

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[4] Complete Works, Vol. IV, p. 6

Let us not consider this merely tall talk. Swami Vivekananda was a practical visionary. Many of his ideas have materialized, so we can hope this idea of his also will come to pass. He died young. He knew he would not live long. He was in great haste to build the machinery which would work even after his passing away. That machinery is his ideas which are resonant with life, charged with fiery inspiration. If anyone lacks courage, faith and strength, one will find them in the writings and speeches of Swami Vivekananda, though they are now cold print.

"I cannot touch these sayings of his, . . . at thirty years' distance", said the French savant Romain Rolland, "without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero !"

Swami Vivekananda himself once said, "The effect of the work I have started will last at least seven hundred years." Today it is only sixty years after his passing away.

ACTIVISM IN THE VEDIC RELIGION

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The history of humanity shows that for a very long period religion was and to a certain extent still is, the chief guiding principle of the human society. Religion covered the entire life of an individual as well as of the society. The entire sphere of material prosperity as also of spiritual enlightenment was covered by religion. And the Vedic religion—the religion of ancient India—was not an exception to this. Whatever the Vedic Aryans consumed, worshipped, cherished, felt, thought or aspired for, was strictly in accordance with the scriptural injunctions. The spiritual aspect of the religion heartened one at the moment of distress and helped him to get through the disturbance; it developed the inwardness of man. On the other hand, the material aspect induced him to look at worldly things and to satisfy his physical needs. In the absence of this aspect life would not only be difficult but also impossible. There is, therefore, no wonder that Vedic religion, while paying attention to the metaphysical aspect, also aimed at the maintenance and growth of the material upkeep.

The life as depicted in the Vedic literature is particularly active. The chief form of the Vedic religion to be observed by one belonging to any of the first three social orders was prayers and ritual-practices—sacrificial as well as domestic. There are a number of religious sacraments prescribed in the post-Vedic manuals, and at least some of these are mentioned directly in the Vedic literature. These pertain to man's life from birth to death. They are to be performed with the help of the sacred fire established at the time of one's marriage. The fire, once established, is to be maintained throughout one's life. Offerings on it are to be made every evening and morning. Besides the religious sacraments, there are certain rites which are to be performed once every year.

The Sacrificial Rites:

More complicated, more extensive and also more expensive are the sacrificial rites which are to be performed with the help of three or five fires. As a preliminary step, one is required to formally set up the sacred fires. One who is married, has been maintaining the domestic fire and is still young, is entitled to set up the sacred fires in a particular season and under a particular constellation. Out of the three fires, one belongs to the householder, another is intended for the offerings to the divinities and still another is meant for the manes. The domestic fire may be maintained separately or may be merged with the householder's fire. The sacred fires, once set up, are required to be maintained and worshipped regularly throughout the life. As on the domestic fire, offerings are to be made every evening and morning on the sacred fires. All the three fires may be maintained unceasingly, or only the householder's fire may be maintained and the other two fires may be spread out for the time being for the purpose of making the offerings. The fires are required to be worshipped both by the husband and the wife. In case the husband went out on a journey, the wife alone could offer the daily worship. In case both had to go out on a journey, they were required to carry the fires with them, or to consign them into the kindling woods, carry the kindling woods with them, churn them out after reaching the place, spread out the fire and make the offerings.

Next to the offering at every evening and morning, the sacrificer had to perform a fortnightly sacrifice on every full-moon day and every new-moon day. Every four months he had to offer new corn before starting to consume it. He had to complete in a year another cycle of four-monthly sacrifices. Every six months he had to perform an Animal-sacrifice, and in every spring a Soma-sacrifice. All these performances were obligatory for him, and he had to continue them regularly. If he did not perform these sacrifices, he was regarded to have failed in his duty.

Besides these there were several optional sacrifices, big and small, which were performed for the fulfilment of certain desires. These sacrifices ranged from subordinate offerings up to the sacrifices lasting for several days, months and even years. The sacrificial sessions, which lasted for a long time, involved the cooperation of several sacrificers. The great Indian national epic Mahabharata was narrated at one such session. There were certain sacrifices like the Rajasuya and the Asvamedha which were performed only by the kings, of course for the attainment of supremacy and overlordship. The purposes of the optional sacrifices are really varied. They included the attainment of food, rains, wealth, cattle, sons, good health etc.

There was still another category of performances, namely, the incidental rites. These included among other things the expiation-rites. The sacrificial ritual was so complicated that it was practically impossible to perform even a minor rite faultlessly. In order to compensate the big or small defects in the performance of the ritual, numerous expiation-rites have been prescribed. The character of an expiation-rite depended upon the gravity of the fault.

While the domestic rites could be performed by the sacrificer alone or with the help of his priest, the sacrificial rites required the help of a number of officiating priests. Thus the performance of the New-moon and the Full-moon sacrifices necessitated the help of four officiating priests. The performance of the four-monthly sacrifices required the help of five, that of the Animal-sacrifice six, and that of a Soma-sacrifice sixteen or seventeen, besides a number of executive assistants and chanting assistants. As regards the space, the requirements of a sacrificial performance were of course larger than those of a domestic rite. While a small apartment capable of accommodating a single fire-place was adequate for the domestic rite, the sacrificial performance required a bigger chamber to accommodate three or five fire-places, together with an altar. For the performance of any of the other sacrifices, the sacrificer had even to go out and erect a spacious pandal in open space on a river-bank furnished with the fire-places and other constructions.

So far as the materials necessary for a sacrificial performance are concerned, the sacrificer was required to seek the cooperation of almost all the sections of the society. The oblations included fuel derived from the specific trees, sacrificial grass, milk-products, clarified butter, cakes of grains, cooked rice, animal's organs and the Soma plant which had to be procured from a distant place. The erection of pandals required the procurement of building materials and the cooperation of labour. The utensils to be used by the officiating priests were mostly wooden and earthen, and a few were metallic. Besides these, many more articles were required at the different stages of the performance, e.g. ornaments of gold and silver, chariots and bullock-carts, skins of different animals, bamboo-work etc. Thus the performance of a sacrifice depended on the cooperation of all sections of the society who regarded the performance as if of their own.

It can hardly be imagined that the sacrificial religion was practised by one and all at any stage of the Vedic period. The ritual-practice involved a financial burden which all could not bear. The princes, the wealthy, and some Brahmanas patronised by them were probably engaged in the practice of the sacrificial religion. Even a few wealthy members of the lower class were entitled to practise this religion to a certain extent.

The purpose of most of the sacrifices is the attainment of heaven which is a state of happiness without any admixture of misery. The optional sacrifices are performed for the fulfilment of particular desires. Even in sacrifices having the attainment of heaven for their purpose, the sacrificer and his wife follow at the different stages the different offerings with the formulas expressing their secular and other desires. At times the sacrificer's sympathies assume wider form and he performs certain rites for the betterment of the society.

Thus the Vedic householder and his wife were busy throughout their life in performing the various domestic and sacrificial rites. As a result of this ritualistic religion, not only the Vedic family but also the officiating priest, and the various social elements remained always active. The cycle of the Vedic sacrifices is a reflection of the cyclic order of time—day and night, dark half and bright half of the month, the seasons, the southern and northern courses of the sun, and the year. Just as the cycle of time is always moving, similarly the Vedic man is asked to keep always moving by offering worship to the divinities through the form symbolising the cyclic order of time. The Vedic activism aimed at both the material welfare and spiritual enlightenment of the individual as well as of the society.

Activism in general:

The Veda not only prescribes the acts of sacrificial rites but also advocates activism in general. A Rishi of the Rigveda asks the gambler to keep away from gambling, pursue the trade of agriculture and be satisfied with whatever he gains by resorting to good acts. Another Vedic Rishi says, "O King Soma, do thou acquiesce in my good deed". One frequently meets in the Vedas with such benedictions as "May we live a hundred years; may we rejoice a hundred years. May we remain undepressed for a hundred years." There is a Rigvedic saying meaning, "God helps those who help themselves".

The Philosophy of Mimamsa:

The religion and philosophy of the Veda was, in course of time, developed into a full-fledged system of philosophy, namely, the Mimamsa. The Mimamsa is in fact a Dharmasastra—science of duty. Just as inward thinking is an important aspect of human life, similarly activism is an equally important aspect of the same. Self-realization and activism are the two constituent parts of a real culture. The culture will vanish if either of these two constituents disappears. Mimamsa is based on the pre-Upanishadic Vedic literature; it lays down extensively the rules governing the comparative authority of the Vedic passages in respect of the complicated rituals. It however, does not stop here; it further discusses the philosphical implications of the ritualistic injunctions. According to the Mimamsa, the world is in a state of eternal movement. Man himself is a unit; there is no Self detached from Matter. The mutual association of Self and Matter is beginningless and endless. Suffering is not an inevitable factor in human activity, and man can attain the ultimate goal of absolute happiness even in a state of activity. The world processes conform to the prescribed and prohibited activities of man by producing corresponding results. Man can choose the prescribed or prohibited act, but once he has done the act, he must face its result. The Veda, which comprises the Mantra and the Brahmana, is, according to the Mimamsa, one of the important means of cognition. The Veda was not composed by any one; it is eternal. The relation between the word and its meaning is also eternal. There is no necessity of God for the composition of the Veda. As mentioned above, the world is in an eternal state of movement; it was never created, and will never be destroyed. So it does not require any creator. Because the world is eternal, the ethical law governing its process must also be eternal. That law is prescribed in the Veda, so the Veda also is eternal.

As has already been mentioned, the Veda prescribes three kinds of rituals: obligatory, incidental and optional. The obligatory acts lead to the attainment of the heaven only after death. But in that case the continuity between the cause, namely the sacrifice and the effect, the heaven, is lost. So Kumarila, the great exponent of Mimamsa, says that the act performed by the sacrificer assumes the latent form of *apurva* and resides within the sacrificer. It cannot reside within the divinity to whom the sacrifice is offered, because its result is to be produced for the sacrificer, not for the divinity. Nor does it reside within the sacrifice because it is over. A good action will produce a favourable *apurva;* a bad action will produce an unfavourable one. Now different persons might be performing different acts, so there is a possibility of a conflict among them. The Mimamsakas therefore say that there is a unitary action which controls the different processes of the world—the different actions of the different persons. Thus action (*Karman*) is the highest principle according to them. By performing a good action, one attains the heaven through the *apurva* produced out of that action. Since every thing produced has an end, the heaven also has an end. After having experienced the heaven one must return to the earth, again perform the prescribed actions, accumulate the *apurva*, and again attain the heaven. Thus the cycle of activity goes on for ever.

Jaimini, the author of the Mimamsasutras, did not think of liberation of soul from the world; but Kumarila and Prabhakara, the two great teachers of the Mimamsa school, accepted its possibility. They maintain that in order to attain liberation one should act in such a way that *apurva*—good or bad—will not be produced by his action. He should not do an act which is forbidden; nor should he do an act which is optional. He should be doing such acts as the daily *Agnihotra*, etc., as are obligatory so that no *apurva* would be accumulated and ultimately he would be liberated. Thus it has to be admitted that the later Mimamsakas deviated a little from the original logical stand probably under the influence of the other systems of philosophy and adopted the principle of liberation.

Whatever it may be, Mimamsa bravely advocated the principle of activism so essential for the existence and all-round prosperity of any society.

Even though unfortunately this system of philosophy was neglected in India long ago, it holds a significant place in the philosophical and cultural history of India. One cannot and need not practise the intricate ritualistic religion laid down in great details in the Vedic literature, but the basic principle underlying those rituals, namely, activism is indeed worthy of being faithfully followed not only by the citizens of India but also of the World for the benefit of both the individual and the society. This principle of the Vedic religion can hardly be said to have been preserved to the fullest extent in Hinduism, and this deficiency may be said to have been responsible for the setback it received particularly in the sphere of social integration. It is appropriate to recall that principle on the occasion of the Birth-Centenary of the great patriot-saint of India, Swami Vivekananda, who himself was, among other things, ethical activism incarnate.

HUMANISM OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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Much have we heard of Humanism in the modern society and various meanings have also been attached to the word *Humanism*. Particularly after the two successive Great Wars the thinking of the intelligentsia is directed towards the preservation of human rights and values. Psychologically speaking, this has become the tendency of thought because of the horrors of War which have shattered many pet theories and abstract ideas of man in the society. This is why we want today the scientists' outlook to be directed towards humanism. The aim of the social sciences is purely humanistic. It is the environment that has made us feel and think like that. From this social outlook we call that attitude humanistic which is amenable and serviceable to the welfare of man. That is humanism which serves the purpose of man in his individual existence as well as his collective existence. Pragmatism and humanism are identified. Centring round this idea of humanism many other similar meanings are attached to it. But all these unfold the broader sense of humanism. This is the sense in which a poet, an artist, an engineer, a teacher, a statesman, a philosopher, a scientist—all are humanists. But this wider sense touches only the outer and the peripheral zone of man and hardly his central being. This is not the sense in which we shall treat of the humanism of Swami Vivekananda. His humanism has a far deeper significance in the estimation of values in human life. Swamiji's humanism may be called the *central theory of man*.

To illustrate: If we draw from a centre many circles with many close, compact circumferences having different radii in infinite space, and if any self-conscious being goes round the circumferences—one after another, without knowing the radius of each circumference, he may be aware of the curvatures only, but shall never get a view of the circle until and unless, of course, he reaches the centre. Now then, let us imagine each circle as a man having his individuality as the circumference, the common centre of the different circles being the universal concept of man. Or, we may imagine all these circles as one man having the selfhood as the centre and the circumferences as the different dimensions of his personality. From whichever point of view we may look at circle-man, it is obvious that an approach from the circumferences to the centre is an appreciation of man from without, i.e. from periphery.

Man is the total circle including both the centre and the circumference. He is a peculiar blend of both self and not-self. But looking at the whole circle or circles from the centre with the measured distances of the radii, we will have a perspective of man as a whole. This approach from the centre to the periphery is the essence of what we call the central theory of man.

The philosophy of humanism preaches that truth is human and truth is pragmatic. Historically speaking, the source of such philosophy in the West was first found in the teachings of the Sophists in Greece in the 5th Cent. B.C. "Man is the measure of all things" is the sum and substance of the teaching of Protagoras who was the first Sophist in Greek Philosophy.

Centring round this maxim the *sahajia cult* of Bengal, a school of commonsense philosophy, also preached among the masses this type of humanistic philosophy. Its tradition came down perhaps from the saying of the poet Chandidāsa—'sūnaha mānūsh bhāi, sabār ūpare mānūsh satya, tāhār ūpare nāi'. This means that man is true and real above all, none else superior to him does exist.

But the crux of the problem, here, lies in the question: *Which man* is the measure of all things ? Out of the different circles mentioned above, which is the circle-man that can be called the criterion of the measurement of truth ? Sophists were not unanimous on this issue and as a result the successors of Protagoras were led to the quagmire of individualism and sensationism which, if practised by the common man in society, will lead to the hopeless abyss of negativism and sensualism that may threaten all human values, all that is best in man. And with this humanism may be totally repudiated. Empiricism and positivism of Europe may be said to have gained ground on this Greek maxim. Pragmatism has its root in this sophism.

From this philosophical point of view, by Humanism is meant a positivistic theory which treats man as an end-in-itself and as a supreme value. This positivistic philosophy is not the humanism of Swami Vivekananda, though it is true that Swamiji in his college days was impressed by the positivism of Auguste Comte. In his life we find how Narendranath in his quest after Truth was fascinated temporarily by the writings of Hume, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, John Stuart Mill, Comte and, above all, Herbert Spencer. Each one of them had a specific contribution to the thought of Narendranath. But we also see how these Western philosophical concepts were blended with the living philosophy of his own motherland and ultimately synthesized into one homogeneous system of thought and life in the future Vivekananda by the magical touch of his master, Sri Ramakrishna.

However, there is another form of humanism which, we find, has just appeared in the latest contemporary European thought. This school of philosophy is known as Existentialism. The names of Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Shengler, are associated with this movement of thought. Jean-Paul Sartre is a chief exponent of this school.

Historically speaking, this thought first found its expression in Europe after the bitter experience of life during the first World War. The movement is said to have gained ground after the Second World War. Human agony, insecurity of life, banishment of all human values have, so to say, given an impetus to some young thinkers of central Europe to look within, to have an intuition of the inner life.

Existentialism is a form of humanism. In sum, this humanism posits that existence comes before *essence*. The reality of everyone's existence, according to this theory, proceeds from the *inwardness* of man and not from outside. Nothing is codified by mind from without. Objectified knowledge is far from the truth. "Truth is subjectivity" (Kierkegaard). "Man is a project which possesses a subjective life." There is no objectivity. Objectivity is the projection of the subject, the man. The so-called objectivity is nothing more than "the knowledge of the perceiving subject as a whole, of a transcendental knower in and by which (or whom) all our perceiving takes place."

In short, from the standpoint of existentialism, "Man is all the time outside of himself, it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist; and, on the other hand, it is by pursuing transcendent aims that he himself is able to exist. Since man is thus self-surpassing, and can grasp objects only in relation to his self-surpassing, he is himself the heart and centre of his transcendence. There is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity. This relation of transcendence as constitutive of man with subjectivity is what we call *existential humanism*. Further the theory says, "this is humanism because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself." This humanism never turns back upon himself, but always "seeks beyond himself, an aim which is one of liberation or some particular realisation, that man can realise himself as truly human."

In the light of these statements, it will not perhaps be too much to say that on fundamental issue of the theory of man, existentialism comes close to the Vedantic concept. On many of its details a *Vedantin* will differ from the existentialist, but here he will shake hands with the latter declaring that this subjectivity is nothing more than the Self, the Ātman, the psychical principle, the knower of all knowledge. Hence instead of saying that there is no other universe except the *human universe*, we should say, there is no other universe except the universality of the Self or Ātman or pure consciousness or pure *Being* (existence).

One of the cardinal principles of Vedānta is the non-duality of the psychic principle, the Ātman, and the cosmic principle, the Brahman. Ātmā cha Brahma, Ahaṁ Braḥmāsmi, Tat-twamasi, etc.—all these texts of the Upanishads stand guarantee to this position of Vedānta.

The philosophy of Śaṅkarāchārya, the pioneer and founder of Vedānta (Advaitavāda), may be summed up in the following three propositions.

(1) Ātman is the subject of cognition—the knowing self, (2) and, as such, can never be an object of knowledge; (3) and this self is the sole reality; beyond it all else is unreal, an appearance or Māyā. "Some particular realisation" or "liberation" as referred to by existential humanism is simply the realisation of this pure self or pure consciousness as it exists. From this point of view of the centre of the circle-man, when an individual soul looks at the horizon of man, he sees nothing but innumerable circumferences each encompassing the same central self as projection or superimposition on different radii.

The humanism of Swamiji is this focal vision of the transcendence as immanental; God as man and not God in man, Jiva as Shiva. It is from this viewpoint of realisation that service to humanity is a service of God. God, Self, Brahman (Absolute) are names of the same Being. On this concept of identity of God and Self one can claim to understand the synthesis of Jnāna and Karma, the reality of man and the appearance of man. This is the keynote of Vivekananda's humanism, a synthesis of the transcendent and the immanent.

Universal love, lasting peace, universal religion of man, co-existence, universal brotherhood and many more of such universal social concepts which the UNO has begun to evolve will only find their significance in this identity of God and man, and in nothing else.

Paul Deussen in his *Philosophy of the Upanishads* says that this identity-concept is "an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind". As a religion this principle of non-duality, according to Deussen, explains the Sermon of the Bible better. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—so goes the sermon. But why ? Deussen says—"because, thy neighbour is in truth thy very self, and what separates you from him is mere illusion." This is the answer of the humanism of Swami Vivekananda.

What Śaṅkara propounded as a metaphysical theory by dint of his scholastic dialectic was applied by Swamiji to the individual in his social life. This practical Vedānta is the spirit of Swamiji's socialism. The good of the society means the good of the individual. It is a two-way traffic—give and take policy. The individual will work for the society not with the idea of serving and doing good to others, since the individual is non-different from the whole. So what he does, is for his own good which is also the good of the whole. This is the meaning of Swamiji's saying—Work is Worship.

Religion is a necessity in human life and not a mere luxury or a fashion of the society in which the individual lives. This religion is not the aggregate of some dogmas and customs. It is the vision of God as man, a realisation of human values within. Even granting that this God-man vision is a mere ideal or concept, we are to admit that it is the best working hypothesis in the world of science and politics.

VIVEKANANDA AND THE FUTURE OF RELIGION

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The image of the root and flower is with us; the emblemised tree, the Tree of Faith, needs the cultural clay, as well as the lighted air above.

The traditional and institutional basis gives firmness to a religion; each religion thrives on a unique and original inheritance. Such is the argument.

The analogical tree spreads its green foliage and flowers in the universal sky. It greets the sunlight from many directions and murmurs in the uncharted air. In its eternal aspect, therefore, and in its supreme message a religion transcends the particularity of history and heritage. Many would accept this interpretation.

Such a view of religion would give to every world faith its own frame, demanding both a separate tradition and a great outreach. Religions might adapt to changing circumstances but such adaptations would be external; each tradition intrinsically remains unchanged. Religions, flourishing within a co-existential sanction will testify to their own texts, founders, rituals and maintain mutual differences while exemplifying high ethics, aspirations and a sense of divine humanity.

Others will contradict this. Not all religions have the same authenticity, they would contend, nor the same richness and significance for man. Indeed, they would name one or another of the existing religions as being supremely endowed to bear witness, to serve the purpose of God and man. This religion has the authority to prevail, and will prevail since it is the one, or the fullest revelation; all other religions will merge therein.

A few would aim at the spread of this one truly universal, institutionalized religion through personal service, devotion and proselytizing, so that all people on earth will know and accept it as their faith.

Others, equally and unquestionably dedicated to their own institutional religion will not work for external conversion or seek to add new members but believe in the way of faith which will make it increasingly acceptable to all men. The inner momentum and the purity of expression, without any reference to power and number would be the best safeguard for the religious faith and its continuity.

A third position is possible. Since all religions are channels, not sources, men will turn more and more to the divine power and truth which the religions, in one way or another, have revealed. Rather, the revelation is a direct experience for each person, and thus, for all communities, and is attainable through a process of absorbing and yet transcending the gifts of one and all religions. Some would add that the mutations of religions through closer understanding and greater mutual influence will inevitably lead to the emergence of one universal religion which has always been and will be increasingly recognized as being man's non-institutionalized religion on earth. This view is not syncretistic and rejects the creation of a new religion by selecting and grouping together bits and parts from different faiths. Prayer, service, and a pure life which is ready to learn and absorb God's gifts wherever they appear; an attitude of critical modesty, a spiritual and intellectual vigilance along with the power to accept reality through experiential knowledge and historical insight would be for such votaries of faith the religion of man. The emerging design, the convergent vision, the beatitude of saints would for them constitute the elements of one supreme faith. Whether or how such a faith could be institutionalized—(could human society be so raised and sensitized to daily spiritual reality as that institutional religion would not be necessary?)—are questions for the future. Religion-in-action, now, the conquest of evil, worship and contemplation would mean involvement, work, and faith in a divinely ordained but humanly attained fulfilment. Such a view of religion would refrain from drawing a line between religion and science, for truth though one, can be explored at many levels. Science enhances the religious view. Art in its encounter and expression is also a component of the great religion of man. The secular and the holy, from this viewpoint are mainly semantic differences for much that is secular is holy and the redemptive process applies all over, while a great deal of so-called holiness is a crime against man and his Maker. Not all experience, but radiant experience touched by light, by reverence, by wonder and understanding would be clearly identifiable with religion.

Perhaps the Upanishadic position, in its main emphasis, is super-religious in the sense that it does not advocate any particular creed or faith and is non-institutional. The vertical as well as the horizontal access, that is to say, direct worship and communion, along with deep knowledge of this world of God's creation belong to their spiritual religion. No person, no tradition is specifically followed though divinely inspired personalities and great traditions of truth and work are revered. Thus, spiritually illumined souls are "informed"; and *sarvam evam avisanti*, they enter the All. The material world is not ignored, it is mastered; it yields itself to those who know the divine law and, therefore, conquer the laws of reality. The Upanishads go so far as to say that a man of faith who does not seek the truths of the material world but has only faith, is in the greater darkness. Compared to him, the person who knows materiality is less darkened. But, the scriptures add, he who combines divine knowledge with the knowledge of the world reaches genuine freedom.

Such a view can be over-simplified and brought into conflict with true religion. But this third view of religion which is different from the two others needs a modern exploration. It does not advocate parallel or merely plural institutional religions nor accept only one institutional religion as man's faith.

To many it would appear that the Vedanta concept would cut across the three positions, but how? All men being human, is there one basic faith? Not only the ground of mystical experience or intuitional knowledge, but also historical insights would be necessary. Truth known both intellectually and subconsciously would belong to religion. Some Vedantist interpreters would accept this position. But, would certain Hindu concepts, gleaned from metaphysical traditions, certain doctrines, particular saints and seers, incarnations named and specifically recognized by Hinduism be essential for Vedantism? Would Vedanta then identify itself more with one institutional religion than with others?

Swami Vivekananda was a seer, he was also an organizer; he was in the direct line of Sri Ramakrishna's revelatory and expository tradition, but he was also the first to establish a new Order in India. A towering personality, a clear intellect, and a man of God, he had to deal with disciplines and regulations, and reestablish Vedantic Hinduism in an age in which religions, with their affinities and differences are seen in the newer perspectives of a globally proximate human race. Many problems remain untouched if we advocate pluralism in religion, each aspirant and practitioner choosing his own creeds or rejecting them all, following a humanist, existentialist, or an atheistic persuasion. The freedom is there, but is such freedom advocated or accepted as Vedantism ?

In Kanyakumari this writer recently looked at the three oceans into which the tip of India seemed to vanish—the vanishing tip connected with what has been called the Vivekananda rock, for he meditated there. From the South to the high reaches of the Himalayas lay India which Vivekananda traced in his many pilgrimages. He drew from many currents and knew the sources of Indian traditions. On the banks of the Ganges in Bengal, the new Vedanta movement began, and it has centres now all over India and in countries abroad. Religions other than Hinduism flourish on Indian soil, and have a great and devoted following. The Vedanta view of them could not be merely tolerant, but relational. How does one substantiate such a statement ?

Religion is timelessly topical but since it is also topical, the problem of "inclusive" or "exclusive" faiths—words which are useless till they are enunciated—demand a new clarification. The Centennial holds our attention; in a world gathering such as this where men of faith from many faiths have joined the future of religions or of Religion can be reviewed. Vedantism will do this in the light and testimony of India's modern saint, Vivekananda.

CHAPTER IV

VIVEKANANDA AND THE SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE OF THE MODERN WORLD

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The Vedanta First Brought to the West

The world does not know its great men. They constantly emerge from all ranks of society, and great events repeatedly centre round them. But because those events are not always spectacular, and do not immediately capture the imagination of large masses of people, they are not taken note of—at least for the time being. Things seem to go their own way, and their advent often passes without creating any stir.

Yet certain things do happen, particularly in the domain of the intellect and the spirit, which work on silently after they first manifest themselves in a particular corner of the world. They bring in questionings and ideas which silently work as a leaven, and they gradually become a great force changing the minds and ways of men. Their guidance helps to bring out the best faculties of men, and makes them work not only for their own inner perfection in matters of mind and spirit, but also for the good of all creatures; and they seek also to bring justice, equality, and freedom for all.

We can think of the questionings in the mind of the Buddha when he was a young prince, which formed the pivot for a great system of thought in which the mind was sought to be made free, and human relations were sought to be based on understanding and love. We can think of the trial of Socrates, and we can realize what it meant in the evolution of philosophical questionings in Europe. Similarly, how, from a little incident which took place in the eighth century in a mosque in Mesopotamia, a liberalizing movement in Islam was set in motion. When, one day, Wasil bin 'Ata al-Ghazzal, a Persian pupil of an orthodox theologian, did not agree with his Arab master, Hasan of Basra, he went to a different part of the mosque where the discussions were being held; and there he propounded his own views, and this gave rise to the free thinking of the Mu 'tazila sect in Islam which was responsible for such great development of the rational and truly philosophical spirit within that religion. We may also be reminded of the little incident of Martin Luther's challenge being nailed on the door of the Cathedral at Wittenberg, calling into question the spiritual authority of the Pope.

Thus do apparently minor incidents lead to great events. One such incident happened in America in the year 1893. In that year a poor and unknown young man from India found himself in Chicago, and after great difficulties and hardships was accepted as a spokesman for the Hindu religion in a gathering, invited by America—the World Parliament of Religions, which was the first International Congress of Religions. This young man, Swami Vivekananda, not sent officially by any recognized Hindu organization in India, and looked at askance by some of his own countrymen in that foreign land, by his first few addresses in the plenary meetings of the Parliament electrified the whole audience, and it can be said without any exaggeration, ushered in a new era—even in rich and highly advanced America—in the Western man's approach to religion. Followers of scriptural religions, that is, religions which believe in the validity before God and man of their own scriptures only, to the exclusion of everything else, and who think that their own doctrines and dogmas form the only true path to the Ultimate Reality, received the greatest shock when they were told of quite a different way of approach to the fundamental Truth. Swami Vivekananda, in the course of those few wonderful talks during the days of the Parliament, presented a new way of thought which called for a revision of mentality among the greater part of his audience. This audience consisted mostly of orthodox Christians of different denominations, and Jews and others, who had settled down to the comfortable feeling that all was well with them, for they were the only inheritors of God's world of truth, and that spiritually, the situation was bad for the rest of the world; all others were benighted people who were denied the grace of God by being condemned to be born in a different faith—their only way to salvation being to repudiate their past associations and heritage and join the body of the elect in full surrender.

The still small voice of reason came down from Heaven, as it were, and it became in Vivekananda's mouth a clarion call rousing those who were in a stupor; and people who had any deeper and wider concept of things began to be in a questioning mood. A silent and slow conversion of the mentality of groups of men and women was started wherever the message of Swami Vivekananda penetrated. There was, of course, a tremendous amount of opposition, particularly where vested interests had become interlinked with certain orthodox faiths and cults. There was also the force of habit in these matters, since people generally dislike to be drawn out of the ruts through which they travel. There was also the *amour propre* of those who believed in the innate superiority of the white man in all matters, intellectual and spiritual as much as in the domains of scientific achievement and material success. This has been an almost permanent barrier, preventing the dissemination of reasonable and rational ideas in religion and the religious perspective. There was a sense of fear and dismay at an exotic religion from far-away India, a country of coloured people who were 'heathens', making headway in God's own country. When, in 1897, Swami Vivekananda formed the Ramakrishna Mission, and the first batches of missionaries from India went out to propagate the teachings of the Vedanta philosophy of ancient India as expressed by Sri Ramakrishna and his great disciple, the Swami himself, there was nothing but hostility and opposition, open as well as covert.

But those who were closing their ranks to oppose a growing interest in the Vedanta encountered a strange thing. Here was a group of people, calling themselves missionaries of a particular faith or attitude in religion, who disclaimed any desire to make converts, to bring 'erring souls' within their own fold. On the other hand, these "missionaries" frankly declared that it was not their intention to proselytize. Swami Vivekananda himself had categorically declared in one of his Chicago utterances that he never desired that the Christian should become a Hindu, just as he would not desire a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. So here was a missionary body, which had gone from India to America, formally disclaiming any propaganda for conversion. What they did declare, and continued to declare before a bewildered American people, was the eternal message of India which came down from the time of the Vedas:

"Truth is one; sages describe it in many ways"—*Ekam sad, Viprā bahudhā vadanti.*

This great doctrine has been subscribed to by the most profound thinkers of all races and all religions. But generally this great idea has been lost—people, almost everywhere, believing that the whole truth was only in their own keeping and what others believed in was either untruth or truth in a fragmentary form. But in India, in her way of thought and life through the centuries, for the last 3,000 years at least, this has been the great idea that a man can obtain the *summum bonum* in his life—his *niḥśreyas*, his *purushārtha*—if he follows in sincerity the life of faith and good work which he has in his own environment. As a very well-known Sanskrit hymn to Siva the Great God, the *Mahimna-stotra*, has put it:

rucīnām vaicitryād ṛju-kuṭila-nānā-patha-juṣām
nṛṇām eko gamyastvam asi payasām arṇava iva—

"Thou art the only goal of men, who, according to the variety of their tastes, prefer various ways, some straight, some crooked; just as the sea is the goal of all waters."

One of the greatest religious teachers in the modern world, Sri Ramakrishna, sought in his life to experience the different forms of religious conception and perspective, and he evidently succeeded in doing it. The ancient message of the Vedas he gave to the world in a new form: *Jato mat, tato path*—"As many persuasions, so many ways."

When this simple message, which takes its stand on certain universal understandings, found throughout the whole of Humanity, was brought to America and also to Europe, with all the conviction and logic and force and persuasiveness of a Ramakrishna and a Vivekananda, it started its work as a potent leaven in the minds of men who were anxious to realize the Ultimate Truth. A new type of conversion, inner, and not outer, slow, silent, and effective, thus began.

The workers of the Ramakrishna Mission, the *Sannyāsins* or *Swamis*, monks or dedicated mendicants of the Ramakrishna Order, began a two-fold line of work according to the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. In India its first aim was to preach the basic things of Hindu religion and philosophy to the masses who were born within it, and to present before all and sundry, through the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and their associates, the philosophy of the Vedanta. This was one wing of the work—spiritual teaching and guidance. The other wing, the second aim, was to minister to the material needs of the people. This was sought to be done by starting hospitals, poor-houses, orphanages, and organizations for relieving distress during times of famine and flood and other scourges of nature.

On the one hand, the aim was to arouse the spiritual in man, to make the sleeping lion come to the realization that man is, after all, a part of the Universal Spirit and Being which we call God; that he is God though he does not know it. On the other hand, the aim was the practical religion of worshipping God through service to suffering humanity, of finding one's own fulfilment by ministering to the needs of the poor and the down-trodden, the sick and the helpless, the debased and the oppressed. Swami Vivekananda coined several new expressions. One was the word *Daridra-Nārāyaṇa*—a Sanskrit expression which can be used in all the languages in India, and it means "God who dwells in the poor" or "the poor who are a form of the Divinity", to whom our active sympathy and service and not mere lip-service should go. He said in unequivocal terms that he who is searching for God far away from himself is deluded: God is before him in the form of the poor and the needy who require the help of more fortunately placed human beings. Swami Vivekananda was a preacher of the basic, absolute equality of all creatures, and this was one of the immediate conclusions of the Vedanta philosophy. Since all human beings are a part of the innate Divinity, they are all equal, and no one can be looked upon as inherently inferior to another. We have the basis of this sentiment in that Sanskrit saying which is current all over India: *Yatra jīvaḥ tatra Śivaḥ*—"Wherever there is a human life or soul, there is God". If Swami Vivekananda hated anything, it was the barbarous attitude which developed in Hinduism in its days of decadence—its concept and practice of "Untouchability" (*aspṛśyatā*). Certain classes of men by the mere fact of their birth in a humble society were considered so low that they could not be touched by people who thought themselves superior to them, and to all other groups of men. Vivekananda used an English expression of his own coining, *Don't-touchism*—and that was his indignant condemnation of the attitude of many unthinking Brahmans and others who would consider themselves to be so superior in holiness that they would not allow people of certain lower ranks in society to touch them, or even in some cases to come too close to them.

In India he gave it as his very strong opinion that the lower classes were being denied their human rights, and the masses had to be fed and educated and raised to a higher standard of life before one could profitably preach spiritual truth or faith to them. Therefore, as a religious teacher and as a social reformer in India, he enjoined that teaching and serving humanity should go together, hand in hand. In a rich and well-organized country like America, where all sections of the people knew how to take care of themselves, the second aspect of his teaching had no immediate value—there was no crying need for it. It was along the other way that the approach was to be made in order to bring about the establishment of the good life. This good life could be arrived at by sincerely following the best teachings of any or all the religions of the world; and in this matter there was very great value in the realization that God had no chosen people, or had no particular love or particular hatred for any group belonging to any faith:

Samo'haṁ Sarva-bhūteṣu, na me dveṣyo'sti na priyaḥ—

"I am the same for all beings: there is none whom I hate, none whom I favour", as we read in the *Gītā* (IX. 29).

The Work of the Swamis

The Ramakrishna Mission *Sannyāsins* went to America following the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda. They went without any resources. India as a poor and disorganized country had no rich men or rich missionary organizations to help them. They had nothing to take their stand upon in a strange land, excepting the love and interest of some of those who had appreciated the value of Swami Vivekananda's teachings and had come to realize the importance of the universalism taught by the Vedanta. Through more than half a century of work and service in some of the different centres of America, to which they were called by enquiring spirits, these *Sannyāsins* have been able to perform what may be described as a miracle. They did not blazon forth the superiority of Hinduism over any other religion. On the other hand, they clearly emphasized and demonstrated the acceptance of the permanent and universal aspects of all other religions.

They also vigorously disclaimed the idea that without conversion to a single doctrine and dogma it would not be possible to prepare Humanity for God's grace. This last idea was in the attitude of most of the current systems of religion, and the Indian spirit was frankly against this. To quote the simile used by Dr. Radhakrishnan, they were trying to do an impossible thing—'to put souls in uniform'. The Ramakrishna Mission *Sannyāsins* asked people only to follow sincerely and humbly the basic teachings and tenets of their own religion, teachings and tenets which had an appeal for man everywhere. When explaining the philosophy of the Vedanta to enquiring spirits, the Swamis always underlined the fact that there was fundamental agreement in all faiths, in spite of outward and apparent conflicts, and that in the general Indian attitude, and particularly in that of the Vedanta, there was more humanization and universalization of conflicting opinions than in any other current system of religious thought and practice. Those who by enquiry and study accepted the validity of the universalist approach and wanted to be united more closely with this body of opinion were permitted to be members of the Ramakrishna group. But there was no formal conversion. In the case of the comparatively few people who were attracted by the way of life of the Indian *Sannyāsins* and wanted to participate in that life, they were allowed to join the Ramakrishna Order only after a full period of rigorous training and discipline as *Brahmachārins* or trainees for the position of a *Sannyāsin*, monk or religious mendicant, dedicated to the service of both God and man through study and devotion, practice and scholarship, as well as unceasing work.

With this kind of ideal and programme in front of them, the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission under the inspiration of Vivekananda have been slowly making their influence felt. The Ramakrishna Mission is working not only within India itself, where it appears now to be the only body within the Hindu fold which seeks to disseminate the essential teachings of the Vedanta as they were adapted for this age by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda; the organization is maintaining, at the same time, the characteristic Hindu attitude of tolerance and appreciation towards all other faiths and persuasions. Those who are anxious to know something about the basic things of Hindu philosophy and religion and its history, as well as the path of realization which is prescribed in it, are turning to the Ramakrishna Mission and its *Sannyāsins*—the Swamis. It was fortunate for India (and also for the world) that the dynamic personality of Vivekananda was able to inspire and initiate a number of dedicated individuals who have taken up the great task which was commenced with such glorious success but left unfinished by Vivekananda. These *Sannyāsins* are a band of men who have the sacred fire burning in their hearts, a fire which has consumed all desire for worldly life and happiness. They are largely erudite men, well versed in the Sanskrit scriptures and in their exposition, as well as in the history of other religions and philosophies; and they not only have that learning and scholarship but also faith and devotion and practical application.

These *Sannyāsins* from India—from Bengal, Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnataka, and Western and Northern India—are making their presence felt everywhere. In England, France, South America, and the United States, and in some other countries like Malaya, there are the *Sannyāsins* working for the propagation of Indian philosophy and thought, for the understanding and appreciation of honest religious endeavour, and wherever needed (as in Burma, Malaya, and Fiji) for the uplift of the people. The United States, as a great and inquisitive country eager for all sorts of experiments and new experiences in religion, has the largest number of Ramakrishna Mission centres. The Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission establishments, or Vedanta Societies, through their personality and character, their learning and scholarship, their eloquence and power of expression, their literary gifts in translation and interpretation or exposition, their powers of organization, and above all, by their active idealism, their burning faith, and their deep devotion, are slowly creating, within the domain of Western thought and religion, a niche for progressive religious thought, as expressed in the Indian way of thinking and living.

What their achievements in this field are, we do not much know in India. Their translations, showing rare literary gifts in rendering into English difficult mystical and philosophical texts like the *Upanishads*, the *Gītā*, and other works, as well as the simple and straightforward discourses of Sri Ramakrishna; their regular exposition of these old texts in a way which makes these texts of use to both lay people and scholars and thinkers in the changing modern world, in solving their problems both personal and communal as well as national; their instructions about practical religion and realization—all these are gradually becoming understood in India, and the ideas they carry are slowly permeating the mind of the West. To see is to believe. Any Indian who goes abroad, to Paris and London, and to the more important towns of America, to Tokyo and elsewhere, will be able to appreciate the greatness of the work that is being done silently and slowly. I shall not speak about all the wonderful establishments, centres for the dissemination of the Vedanta in thought and action, which have been built up at enormous expense. I can only mention, for example, the new structure of the Vedanta Center in the city of San Francisco which, I understand, cost five hundred thousand dollars, and the thousand-acre property of forest land beyond the Golden Gate to the north of San Francisco, where a series of lodges for quiet meditation is going to be built for those who seek to realize in their souls the Supreme Spirit. There are similar well-known establishments in places like Los Angeles and Boston.

I have seen in America *Brahmachārins*—Americans both white and coloured—spending hours in their devotions and then doing all sorts of rough work, and, at the same time, continuing their intellectual enquiries and spiritual exercises through studies into the philosphical bases of the Vedanta and other schools of thought. A number of Americans of the highest intellect have been actively working as colleagues of the Swamis in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other towns and centres of the United States. There is Aldous Huxley who writes expositions of the basic ideas of the Vedanta, as for example, in his article on 'the Perennial Philosophy' (*Sanātana Dharma*) forming his Introduction to a translation of the *Gītā;* there is Christopher Isherwood who is collaborating with Swami Prabhavananda in Los Angeles, in the same way as Aldous Huxley; and there was the great writer, Somerset Maugham. Recently there was in Hollywood a popular festival in which the character of different religions was described and explained before a large lay public. Hinduism could not be dismissed as something foreign and exotic—a bundle of superstitions and 'beastly devices of the heathen', in the way in which it used to be by the uninformed Christian missionaries two generations ago. This festival described Hinduism in its true nature as a universal religion of understanding and tolerance, and showed how this Indian leaven was working in cultured minds in America.

The account of Hinduism given in *Life* magazine some years ago, when it described in five different numbers the five great religions of the world, was something which would only evoke the respect of discriminating and impartially-minded people. Direct as well as indirect impress of the ideas which were preached by Swami Vivekananda are now to be found in the writings of modern writers. Witness, for example, a novel like *The Plumed Serpent* by D. H. Lawrence where the hero, Ramón, passionately declares before the Roman Catholic Bishop the necessity for modern man of a Universal Church, where all the great teachers of humanity will have their voices heard, adding that different religions are like different languages.

Vivekananda's Mission

Such views are just echoes of what Vivekananda preached. It is largely his genius and inspiration that have been able to achieve all this. In 1893, when Swami Vivekananda rose to describe what Hinduism was, it was something new—quite a novel phenomenon. No one before him had tried in the same manner to give expression to the basic concepts of Hinduism in its historic evolution and its actual working in the present age. As Sister Nivedita, the great disciple of Swami Vivekananda, declared that when he had spoken on Hinduism, Hinduism was born. That is to say, its character as a definite way of thinking and a way of life, standing on its own innate and solitary dignity and grandeur, its sweet-reasonableness and comprehensiveness, was brought before the world.

Vivekananda's mind had had a unique development. A restless young man, educated in the modern ways of the English, not having peace in himself because of a great spiritual urge, he wanted to know and realize God; and he could find no means to do it. At last he came in touch with Sri Ramakrishna, and he obtained, through contact with this great saint, what his soul desired. He had become like "one who had reached the other side", *pahunche-hūe*, as we say in Hindi. Then, after travelling throughout the whole of India and seeing the contrast presented by Indian life with its profound sense of philosophy and kinship with God on the one hand and, on the other, the abject misery of the neglected and down-trodden masses, his restlessness increased.

While travelling from the Himalayas right down to Cape Comorin, he was honoured and entertained by princes, acclaimed by the middle-classes, and humbly waited upon by the poor masses, each group with its own troubles and aspirations. A weary mendicant, he sat down on the extreme southern tip of India at Cape Comorin. Opposite, in the sea which was the meeting point of the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea with the Indian Ocean, he noticed at a short distance two isolated rocks, black and barren. He swam across the little channel in the sea and went to these rocks, to contemplate for a while, from an isolated spot on one of them, the whole of India spread in front of him. This rock is now known as the Vivekananda Rock. There he felt a great urge—he must go out of India and spread the ideals and the mission of India throughout the whole world. It was a mission of peace and harmony through realization of the essential unity of things, as the Vedanta preached.

With the help of some friends in South India, and of some ardent admirers and disciples like the Maharaja of Khetri in Rajasthan in North India, Swami Vivekananda found himself in America, after visiting Malaya, China, and Japan on the way. In America he came in contact with a virile and progressive people who were intoxicated with their material welfare, success, and advancement. But in the domain of intellection in religious matters and of spiritual perception, they had a long way to travel. In America he found, nevertheless, a number of kindred spirits far in advance of the general run of the people, of even the educated ones. We should remember that in America we had such great humanists as Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. In America there was also a strong school of the Unitarian faith, which had freed itself from the spell of myth and dogma in religion. After he had been in America for two years, he found still greater scope for his work, and he plunged into the midst of it all and did not spare himself in moving about all over the land and in giving talks and discourses and advice and admonitions to all who wanted guidance from him and from the spirit of India.

Among the various places he visited during his peregrinations was a place in the countryside within New York State known as Thousand Island Park, as his friends had insisted that he should take a little rest and recoup himself for further strenuous work. He was indeed feeling tired, and required rest and recuperation. The St. Lawrence river forms a boundary between the United States and Canada, and a good length of that river is dotted with some 1,700 islands, big and small. Many of these are uninhabited, while a large number have now summer houses on them erected by rich people. Thousand Island Park is the name of a village in the biggest of these islands. At the present day it is easy to cross the St. Lawrence river by the beautiful "international bridge" connecting the United States with Canada. But sixty-seven years ago the only access to the island was by means of a steamer from the mainland opposite. The place is now quite a flourishing village, and has a population of health-seekers and those who want to take rest during the summer months. When Swami Vivekananda visited the place, it was naturally not so crowded with houses as it is now. He stayed there for seven weeks in a house belonging to one of his disciples, and he was accompanied by a small number of his ardent disciples and devotees. He used to meet them and talk to them informally as well as in classes and lectures. It was a fine thought of some of his disciples to take down all or a good deal of what he said there, and the record of his talks is available in the form of a book known as *Inspired Talks*. This place, with its atmosphere of a Himalayan hermitage, acted as balm to his jaded nerves and braced him up for further work. It was in his Thousand Island Park abode that he thought out his solution for a great many problems of India, social, economic, and religious. The idea of starting the Ramakrishna Mission first dawned on him there in Thousand Island Park. There he gave some of his most powerful talks and wrote some of his finest compositions, including that English poem known as the *Song of the Sannyāsin*. Personally I feel very happy that it was my great good fortune to make a pilgrimage to the Vivekananda House in Thousand Island Park during October 1962, when I spent five days in that beautiful place, which is like a hermitage in the Himalayas, drinking deep of the spiritual peace and joy which formed its atmosphere. In Thousand Island Park, I could not help feeling that although Vivekananda was born in India and developed his full personality in the atmosphere of his own country with its ancient traditions and its culture, he was a cosmopolitan figure who found himself, so to say, and became aware of his mission, and was firmly established in his convictions and his endeavours, in the midst of the totally different—almost complementary—surroundings of young and impetuous America.

I hope I shall be pardoned if I bring in a personal note. Swami Vivekananda has been one of the formative forces in my life, and I am eternally grateful to him, and also to Rabindranath Tagore, for helping me to understand myself and my people as well as the world around.

Like Rabindranath, Vivekananda has been an influence for the good of man. He has helped and comforted and strengthened by his living personality and by his deathless writings, hundreds and thousands of men and women, not only in India but all over the world. In this way, like Rabindranath, Vivekananda is one of the great international figures of the present age, and the influence of both of them will certainly endure for ever in the history of man. Vivekananda demonstrated to the world what India with her way of thought and way of life had been; and, incidentally, with this presentation of India's position in the domain of life and the spirit, the outside world has been enabled to appraise and appreciate what India has been privileged to do for the happiness of humanity. He has unquestionably helped in the spiritual renaissance of man in the present age.

The Challenge to India

Now, by the aggression of Communist China, India, with her own place in the comity of nations—her special 'position of seniority'—is face to face with a new danger, which is also a danger for the whole of humanity. The very negation of the sacredness and inviolability of the individual, the deliberate destruction of his freedom to think and to act, combined with a callous throttling of whatever the Inner Voice of man has to say; and the cynical and tyrannical determination, which is blatantly covered with the unction of universal philanthropy, to compel, by force of arms and by destruction of men and society, all the nations of the world to come within their influence, dominance, and exploitation: all these present some profound problems before the race of man. In this the Chinese have not spared even their own country with its great past, a country which has given to the world a Lao-tzu and a Confucius, a Mo-tzu and a Chuang-tzu, and her unique creations in art and literature, philosophy and science. They are destroying the soul of China, as that of other nations.

Apart from all transient and secondary political and economic questions, Communist China is out to destroy the very bases of India's conception of life and society—a conception which is also that of most other civilized countries. This conception is of a life of peaceful co-existence with mutual respect and toleration among all sections, and of a society dedicated to spiritual endeavour in realizing in this life the Ultimate Truth. In its corporate existence, India is now pledged to the creation of a Socialistic State through parliamentary democracy with freedom of speech and action and endeavour, on the background of the sacredness of the individual, and this India has been building up. India's ideal of *Viśva-maitrī*, friendship for all, and her inculcation of *Karuṇā* or universal charity, of *Maitrī* or active good-doing, and of *Ahiṁsā* or non-injury, go counter to the attempt of the present-day Communist rulers and imperialists of China to use both force and fraud and to employ the powers of destruction to establish their own point of view, as a means of compelling people to submit to the will of their ruling oligarchy or group called "the Party". It is a challenge, and we feel that the whole of the civilized world is with us in accepting this challenge. Lét the spirit of Vivekananda arise once again and infuse in us courage and fortitude, sincerity and sacrifice to face the danger, strengthened by faith in the eternal verities and in the divine nature of man, which men cherish everywhere and which only can give a meaning to life.

The main keynote of modern civilization, a little more in the communist countries than elsewhere, would at the outset appear to be to make life on earth happy and pleasant, with as much as possible of physical and aesthetic enjoyment of life. In countries which have declared their allegiance to only a materialistic view of life, the dominating group overtly and covertly is working to destory the idealist view of life: although it is easy to detect in those countries among the thinking classes anxious to find a meaning in life, some sort of malaise, some kind of inner questioning, in even the present situation. Man does not live by bread alone; and merely *panem et circenses*—in modern terms, the maximum of material comfort with a modicum of regimented 'culture'—cannot in the long run satisfy the innate craving of man for the things of the spirit; and this will reduce the people to a state worse than that of an unthinking Roman mob.

In the non-communist countries, where the State or the Ruling Group has not accepted an exclusively materialistic view of life, the deeper questions of life and being are not lost sight of. These are generally looked after by the various religious organizations, the Churches and societies. But these Churches differ from each other in doctrine and dogma, and pin their faith on their own special traditions and myths and allegories as being of universal value and application. These religious organizations, further, are not able to cope with the evils which are now eating into the vitals of society—criminal injustice and heartless exploitation, cruel racialism, callous militarism, and the mad race for speed and for technological domination. Both the wings of present-day society, whether in frankly materialistic countries or in countries which at least give lip-service to idealism and faith, are suffering equally from it.

The desire on the part of modern cultured men to be in close touch with Nature as she is, and to seek to reach fundamentals through philosophy, where science has no answer, and their general acceptance of some ultimate value in existence, are factors which cannot be helpful in their spiritual unfoldment. The *Sannyāsins* of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta organization, under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda, are doing good work in the service of men and women in India and in other countries, particularly in the West, to bring to them some glimpses of the great Reality which is immanent in human existence and also transcends and envelops it, and to help them to be responsive to a sense of the innate Oneness of all Being.

As an Indian who has been to many lands, including far-away America, my travels have strengthened me in my conviction that Vivekananda's Mission and his teachings form one of the pivots for the Humanistic and Spiritual Renaissance of Man in the present-day world. It has indeed been a rare experience for me to realize how the universal spirit of India is marching on, with the stupendous figures of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda standing large in the background, and with the atmosphere of Vedanta steadily lighting up the world; and this experience makes one feel refreshed and heart-whole, and infused with new hope for mankind in the midst of bleak despair and pessimism.

In her holy mission of integrating humanity in a common endeavour, and in arousing a desire and a passion for the religion of the spirit, free from the trammels of narrow sectarian theology, dogma, ritual, and practice limited by time and space and race, India was twice blessed in the present age in giving to the world these two great souls, who, to quote the *Gītā*, are veritable emanations, in varying degrees and in different walks of life, of God's splendour and power: Vivekananda the Prophet and Leader, and Rabindranath the Poet and Seer. And now we have Radhakrishnan the Thinker and Teacher, fortunately still with us at this time of crisis in the history of man. They have guided us and led us along the paths of what may be called *Bhārata-Dharma*—the Indian way of thought and the Indian attitude to life, which is expressed in the Vedanta—the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Gita and the Dhammapada, and other Indian literature. This *Bhārata-Dharma* has meaning and value for the rest of mankind as well. Its ideas are compelling the attention of the entire civilized world, and making people realize once again the need for a spiritual out-broadening and in-deepening of the life of man. And this *Bhārata-Dharma* was incarnate, so to say, in the blessed combination of the personalities of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, acting as a beacon light to man in his spiritual strivings.

WESTERN AND INDIAN MIND'S STRUCTURE AND VIVEKĀNANDA

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Through the increasing outspread of Vedanta in Europe we very often hear statements such as "The West lacks spirituality while India is spiritual" or "The West is pragmatic while India is mystic". Truth is not so simple and statements like the above mean nothing. To confront these two worlds is to realize that there exists a different structure of mind in each of them and that the great period of transitions in the West now-a-days shows that the western structure of mind since the beginning of the 20th century is going through a profound change of attitude.

One of the basic characteristics of our western mind is to be constantly thinking or saying "This is good—that is bad. This is right—that is wrong. This is true, that is false etc." We think in terms of the mind and the world—the subject and the object, as if we never seriously asked ourselves what right we have to create those pairs of opposites. For it is clear that by doing this we admit more or less definite entities which are opposed to each other, contraries which exclude one another, and we trace limits, like the frontiers which separate two countries on a geographical map.

We thus introduce a duality between the world which is surrounding us and the perceiving subject. Anything which is not ourselves we consider therefore as independent of us. This urge of demarcation is a fundamental characteristic of our western mind structure whose roots are prolonged to the cradle of our civilization, the country of Greece.

Regarding the world around them the first Greek philosophers were struck by the diversity of its objects and they were searching to find a principle of unity, which could make them understand and explain this variety, a principle which they called the "arche". This idea of the "arche" remained as a basic preoccupation of the Greek spirit and it greatly contributed to its creativity.

But then something curious and of heavy consequences arrived. By searching this principle of unification, the Greeks soon discovered that the senses were fallacious and the truth they were searching for, transcended mere sense experience. But now there had to be found the means by which this transcendency could be operated. They invented therefore without previous experience, and this must be emphasized, what they called the Logos, the pure thought, which was also named the form or the idea, the Essence, the Soul, or Entelechy. Logos possessed in its own right the ability of forming concepts, which were from then on to dominate man's mind and man's life. And concepts were considered as the only path leading to the objective truth in which they used to believe much more than in the phenomenal world. Thus, the terrible separation of spirit from matter was committed by western philosophers and the effects of this separation were to prove tragically distressing for mankind. Spirit and matter or form and matter thus became mutally exclusive and incompatible and by so becoming they created the greatest and most powerful of all pairs of opposites—the pair of opposites, in fact, that underlies all the others. Not only philosophy, but our theology and science too have had to bear the heavy burden of this irreconcilable duality.

A little later this duality was to be formalized by Aristotelian logic which dominated the intellectual atmosphere till the 19th century. It is easy to see why. According to Aristotelian logic or dialectics a thing either is or is not—it cannot be both at the same time. This means that there is a radical separation between the opposing terms. In fact during the 19th century Hegel made a vigorous effort to reconcile the contradiction by introducing the new dialectic of *thesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*. Yet, according to Hegel, the opposition is not entirely eliminated in the synthesis, for, when he himself said, "That new concept of synthesis still contains the opposition and something more", he was admiting in fact that this new process had not solved the problem.

Leaving aside the specific effects which the Hegelian dialectic had on our western thought and on our political development we have to concede that it gave us a new approach to the contradiction by introducing a more flexible and dynamic concept which had been absent in the old static model of dialectics and in their strict separation of the opposing terms.

With the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century a new current of thought started to sweep our understanding, away from the stagnant water of primitive dogmatism and conceptual dialectics into fresh, intuitive channels which eventually may lead us to the great solutions. It is a remarkable happening that the presence of Swami Vivekānanda in the West should have coincided with the first stirrings of this new current.

Swami Vivekānanda came to us not as a prophet proclaiming his own doctrine but as the greatest and truest exponent of India's immemorial teachings and traditions of wisdom and love. His words were vibrating through an actual and powerful voice the teaching of the Upanishads, of the Gītā, of the Brahmasūtras.

These three principal sources of Indian thought, as it is known, had given rise to various interpretations through the ages. And it was the great philosopher Śaṅkarāchārya who in the 8th century succeeded in harmonizing by means of a profound intuition and a rigorous dialectic all those various tendencies of the spiritual tradition of his country. He elaborated a vast and coherent doctrine called the Advaita Vedānta which means a Vedic, non-dualistic doctrine. This term shows that Śaṅkara accepted neither monism, nor dualism, pluralism or pantheism. He refutes all the extremes without however defining explicitly one point of view. And Advaita Vedānta is to us an open philosophy which without rejecting the past leaves the mind free in order to find other perspectives and to arrive at an ultimate plane of comprehension. It tries not to imprison spirit in a static position by assigning to it a sole and unique point of view. As it has been well remarked, Advaita Vedānta is not a philosophy; it teaches us rather how to philosophize. The truth is that Advaita Vedānta does not accept one and the same reality on all planes of knowledge. It distinguishes between inferior or incomplete knowledge and knowledge superior or complete. It distinguishes degrees of reality.

According to Vivekānanda's teaching also knowledge is not immutable but transformable, according to the successive stages which the individual is capable of attaining. This teaching is very similar to Einstein's conception that a phenomenon changes according to the position of the observer.

For my short paper I am going to limit myself now to a very brief exposition of one problem only which we consider to be of essential importance for Vivekānanda's teaching in the West and at the time he gave it in the West. It is the problem of contradictions as explained in the Māyā doctrine by Vivekānanda, which reveals to us, westerners, the characteristic Indian outlook of philosophy. In order to discover the reason for this characteristic Indian outlook let us go back for a moment to the beginning and the first expression of Indian philosophy.

Like the first Greek philosopher the Indian was also confronted with the world and its enigma, but unlike the Greek he was not chiefly struck by the variety of our objects nor was he led at first sight to resolve the puzzle of their nature. The Indian sage was far more impressed by the *impermanence* of the phenomena which he observed in the world outside as well as in his own nature. So, the first question he asked was "What is real and what is unreal ?"

It is of considerable importance for us to note and remember this Indian manner of approach, because it gives us the key to the whole structure of Indian philosophy in the same way as the Greek search for the principle (for the Arche) gives us, as we have seen, the basis of western thought. Much earlier than the first Greek philosopher the Indians discovered also in their search for the Real that the Real transcends sense experience. But the seers of the Upanishads did not jump to the conclusion that pure thought, or creative Reason could of its own right solve their difficulties or lead them through its concepts to the ultimate answer. The pretension of the western philosopher to be able to leave his finite state behind and travel to reach the realm of the Real with the sole assistance of his pure thought would have seemed a somewhat arrogant boast to the Indians.

It is evident enough that the search for the Real was not an idle intellectual exercise. It was a burning question implicating the very fundamentals of our being and of our entire existence, of our psychophysical nature.

"What is real, what is unreal"—this question contains man's anguish, through the indisputable knowledge of impermanence of all that exists including himself. It is an existential question in the literal meaning of the term. And Indian metaphysics is for us a metaphysics of Being. Its goal is to attain, by vivid and actual experience, the realization of a supreme state of pure consciousness, of crystalline lucidity. The result of such a supreme state of man's awareness, the awareness of the Eternal Self is not the product of pure thought and cannot, therefore, be moulded into concepts or ascertained by definitions. Short aphorisms could only indicate this state: "Tat-twam-asi."

The Indian state of pure consciousness is devoid of object and is sufficient unto itself—to its own plenitude. Instead of the possessive verb "I *have*", only the verb "I *am*" may express this state. I am knowledge, I am truth. "Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi". It is no longer I love—meaning I have love for this or that person—but it becomes I am love. So knowledge is transformed into real wisdom for "only that is comprehended which one becomes and is." One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman.

The term consciousness has therefore an interpretation for you altogether different from that for us who see consciousness as an intentional consciousness, consciousness of an object or of somebody. But let us not imagine that Indian pure consciousness (teaches Vivekānanda) is a vague mysticism or pure theory. Indian metaphysics constitutes a method and in order to help us to transcend opposition and to do it "here and now" it asks us to follow different paths adapted to the temperament of each one of us—actif, affectif, reflectif. Different paths are the yogas, which Vivekānanda exposes to the West with an unsurpassable clarity for us and mind's austerity. The great contribution that Vivekānanda has brought to the West is to give a new interpretation to contradictions and to clarify the misunderstanding (introduced especially by western scholars of Sanskrit and orientalists) that the doctrine of Māyā showed the world to be illusory.

Contradictions are always present on the ordinary plane of life. That is Māyā. And Māyā is inevitable as long as we persist on this plane. Māyā is, therefore, not a theory of illusion, says Vivekānanda, but a statement of facts. Yet this state is not an ultimate state. It is a transformable state and that is why we can and we must lift up the veil of Māyā.

Time restrains me to dwell on Vivekānanda's important interpretation of the doctrine of Māyā to the West. I simply mention and underline

Vivekānanda's great genius and understanding of the western structure of mind when he explains to us Māyā as being the way of looking at Reality through our conceptions of time-space and causation.

It is almost self-evident that a philosophy which is the outcome of a dynamic living experience, which negates the schism between mind and matter, cannot possibly arise also from dialectics of radical separation of opposing terms, such as our western classical dialectics, with the primitive rationalistic formula "It is or it is not". In fact Vivekānanda introduces to us the Advaita Vedānta dialectics and its formula of "It is and it is not". Māyā is real and yet it is not real. It is a formula which is highly considered for its importance in our contemporary science and its actual efforts and after its experiments to transform our old pattern of logic and dialectics. This formula indicates that oppositions are accepted, but all exclusive statements are negated. Thus mind frees itself from any necessity of adopting exclusive attitudes.

Coming down from abstractions to our everyday life's experience, we see, says Vivekānanda, that our whole life is a contradiction of good and bad, of false and true. It is this contradiction which makes life appear as an absurdity.

Our contemporary existential philosophy has long preached to us about this feeling of life's absurdity, of nothingness, emptiness. Vivekānanda considers contradictions in a different way. He considers them as more apparent than real and also as complementary to each other. Morally speaking, evil is always present in life yet its nature is not static. It is to be transformed into good. He used to say "Disease is the struggle of nature to cast out something wrong. We must sin—i.e., make mistakes, in order to rise to Godhood." "Only sinners see sin. Our innermost nature is divine and free."

Meanwhile, however, life is bondage. Life is to accept the relativity of not belonging to the extremes. Such conscious acceptance is, according to Vivekānanda, a preparation for the awakening of one's consciousness to the Real which transcends all extremes, all oppositions and contradictions. For when we have felt that our day-to-day life is and can never be anything but contradiction, we then draw into ourselves. This is our first approach to the Real, for, it is only in ourselves, in the innermost of our Being that contradiction can be transcended. Transcendence and freedom are inward only. Exteriority of life is bondage. This drawing into ourselves induces the expansion of our consciousness and that is why Vivekānanda saw in Māyā—in the contradictions of life—the necessary dynamic element for our evolution, the force which sooner or later will push us into ourselves where the Real is to be found.

Before concluding it would be appropriate perhaps to describe very briefly the situation in the West which led to an increasing interest in Indian metaphysics.

In philosophy a notable new trend is that of Existentialism. Dismissing its various dogmatic and restrictive interpretations this new current of philosophy is important in the sense that it places human existence in the center of its interest. Its scope is very wide, for it ventures a new consideration of existence refuting the old belief that truth is objective.

The name of Husserl has to be mentioned however, because he has been the inspiration of much of Existentialism and indeed of contemporary philosophy in general and even modern science. Husserl's "Phenomenology" is a method trying among others to reach the pure "I", as he calls it, or "Pure consciousness" which according to him is without content. Certainly his work must be seen as a very important step in the evolution of contemporary western thought.

This same evolution through which we, in this day and age, are passing as a period of transition is far more sharply defined by the remarkable achievements of modern science than by any other aspect of human endeavour. In this century which may well be defined as the one which seeks to overcome the contradictions, science is undoubtedly at the forefront. Its recent discoveries have shown to us that there is no fundamental difference between matter and energy, and that time and space are not the absolute and separate opposed entities which we once believed them to be. And last but not the least, science has established much to our astonishment the interpenetrability of subject and object. All these are facts which force us to abandon our old conceptions of duality and distinct separation of opposites as definite entities exclusive and irreconcilable to each other.

It should be underlined that these results are the consequences, not of some abstract speculations, but of the lived experiences of our great scientists in their various fields of research.

In fact we must admit that the millenary teaching of India being the outcome of an altogether different experience than that of our contemporary scientists cannot any more seem alien to any thinking person in the West. This does not mean, however, that we have to become Indianised or for the Indians to become Westernised.

As far as the West is concerned it means that we must try to integrate in our contemporry mind the perennial truth of India. And in this sense I should like to conclude with Vivekānanda's own words at the final session of the Chicago Parliament of Religions, which remind us also of Christ's parable about the sower of the seed, the seed being the word of God....

"The seed is put in the ground and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth or the water ? No. It becomes a plant, it develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth and the water, converts them into plant substance and grows into a plant."

VIVEKANANDA—A PROPHET OF LIFE

Prof. M. Chakrabarty

I feel delighted and honoured that I have been offered an opportunity to pay my homage to Swami Vivekananda on this occasion. Time being very short, I would very briefly narrate what I feel for him. The subject of my talk this morning is Vivekananda—a Prophet of Life.

The difference between an ordinary man and a prophet lies in the mental make-up. An ordinary human mortal lives on the levels of physical, biological and animal consciousness only and is satisfied, though partially, with the fulfilment of the primary needs of mere living with objective comforts, but a prophet dives more deeply into the 'Noumenon' and discovers that 'surplus' in man—a form of sixth sense, and declares: "Arise, Awake, stop not till the goal is reached". It means that beyond this empirical life, there is a second one which is beyond the former. The vital question is—Is this sensible world which is a perpetual procession of events limited by space and time complete in itself, or is there a '*Beyond*' underlying and inspiring it as a '*Substratum*'—though existing behind it, but immanent in it ? Is it a fact that there is a circumference everywhere without any centre anywhere ? If there be any centre, what is its nature where we the millions are anchored ?

Vivekananda is a prophet in the sense that he declared a 'Beyond' of this Life and our knowledge of that 'Beyond' is workable in our practical life which is Vivekananda's practical Vedanta. The preparatory stage of our life on this tiny planet contains within itself a great promise, an implicit consciousness of the Ultimate Reality and from this sense Vivekananda says —"Religion is the manifestation of the divinity which is already in man."

That 'Beyond', the prophet says, is not separate from us as we interpret the concept of 'separation' in the objective counterpart of our existence. The relation of the 'Beyond' and the transitory is indivisible. But this indivisibility is not ordinarily understood, because our vision is conditioned by the spatio-temporal relation and as such the vision of the 'Being' is eclipsed like the vision of the sun when there is a piece of cloud in and between the sun and the observer as a barrier.

It is not by 'Becoming' alone we may be happy and peaceful. This 'Becoming' is fruitful when we are in union (Yoga) with the 'Being', resulting in readjustment, reintegration and rejuvenation of our total existence. This Yoga is not intellectual orthodoxy, it is awakening of the life of spirit in man. His books on Jnan-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Karma-Yoga teach and preach that spiritual realisation is an integral experience—indivisible and all-encompassing. Human intellect is an apparatus on which spiritual experience reflects with paleness, but at the same time suggests the existence of everlasting truth, beauty and holiness of the 'Ultimate Being'. The concept of 'Ultimate Reality' is not a static one. It is a dynamic concept which is never-ending. Space, time and other conditions having relative values are so many moving images on the way of 'Being' to the 'Becoming'.

Religion to Vivekananda is not obscurantism or superstition or observance of so many rites. Religion is Antar-Jyoti (inner light) which cannot be put out if once it awakens. This Antar-Jyoti is dormant in us in the form of Kundalini-Sakti and is ready to come to the surface level of our mind whenever it finds the opportunity. Vivekananda got this opportunity in his surrender and self-abnegation to his living Master Sri Ramakrishna. It is by this Sakti the Master illumined Vivekananda through a simple touch and convinced him that behind this objective and physical plane the 'Psychic being' shines with its pristine glory.

Unless a man experiences this power and gets mastery over it, he is unfit either to be a spiritual guide, or a religious teacher or a reformer. To Vivekananda abstract intellectualism is a hindrance to true religious experience. When intellect follows experience and interprets it, it takes the forms of writing, talking, preaching. Otherwise books, scriptures and other symbols of religion condition the religious experience, opening the different avenues for religious communalism resulting in fanaticism. Scriptures, books, temples, churches, mosques etc. are useful to us in so far as they bring the message of spiritual kingdom, but very often they are distorted and utilised for propaganda only. Religion is not propaganda. It cannot be talked into existence. It must be felt and lived. The man who feels it and lives after it is a prophet and his influence on human progress and evolution would be everlasting and evercontinuing.

Religion tends to become corrupt and gets mixed up with a heap of irrelevant and inessential details as time passes by until at last the followers instead of being truly spiritual lose their grip upon the original vision of its founder. Constant remembrance of God makes the mind God-ward. From this constant *Śravaṇa* (hearing), *Manana* (thinking), and *Nididhyāsana* (meditation), the devotee declares that I am God—God the Beyond and God in human form (Naranarayana).

Hinduism, in Vivekananda's opinion, is not a credal religion. It is not a proselytising religion teaching and preaching a particular creed or dogma. It is a culture. When this culture gets living in the heart of any individual through practice, it ends with happy fellowship. Religion without fellowship is empty and dry intellectualism; and fellowship without religion is futile ending with fanaticism and dogmatism.

Vivekananda felt it, experienced it and lived it and as such he is declared as an inspiring prophet of life, a prophet of affirmation.

VIVEKANANDA, THE UNIVERSALIST AND HUMANIST

Dr. Govinda Chandra Dev
Head of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology,
University of Dacca, Pakistan

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I owe a word of grateful thanks to the organisers of this international gathering for their extreme kindness in having invited me to say a few words on Vivekananda's internationalism on this auspicious occasion. Possibly the substance of Vivekananda's internationalism lies in his universalism and humanism. Naturally enough, as a humble student of philosophy, I prefer to take a bird's-eye view of the latter. You will, I am sure, excuse me if I were to say that in doing this I am following what is called in the sphere of fairy tales of this subcontinent the logic of sharing half the kingdom with the bride. If we can catch hold of Vivekananda, the universalist and humanist, we cannot miss Vivekananda the internationalist. But thanks to the almost omnipotent ingenuity of politics, the great Goddess of our times, who has kept sometimes at least even modern science at bay, an international structure might be worked out on the basis of give and take and without much of universalism and humanism in it. Rightly or wrongly, I have no mind to make that risky experiment.

Last Word of Vivekananda

What I value most in Vivekananda is his universalism and humanism. To me as to countless others throughout the world, the birth-centenary of Vivekananda is an epoch-making event because in a practical application of Vivekananda's broad-based synthesis of materialism and spiritualism from which his universalism and humanism follow lies the future of man at this crisis in history. In a real and an intense sense, Vivekananda belongs to the whole human race and not to a particular geographical area or a cross-section of humanity. This is why his centenary has evoked spontaneously enough such a wide response. I shall not be far wrong, I presume, if I were to say that the last word of Vivekananda's philosophy of life is not nationalist patriotism as sometimes at least it is made out to be but his universalist humanism.

On the surface he was a great patriot, an ardent advocate of national growth. But, for him this is a means to an end. For, beneath lies Vivekananda the universalist and humanist, whose real mission is for all man, more particularly for the distressed and the downtrodden, the suppressed and the exploited. With this inspiring humanitarian mission in view, he tried hard to make a synthesis of science and religion and evolve, as the happy merger of both, what Romain Rolland calls, a "Universal Science-Religion" to square evenly with the material as well as the spiritual needs of suffering humanity.

Revolt against iniquities in Hindu Society

Though a bold and a powerful exponent of the substance of Hinduism through ages, he missed no opportunity to revolt against the dirt that accumulated round it, the social iniquities of the Hindu society which run counter to the idea of unity of man and creation, the main fabric of the representative religious scriptures and the great philosophical systems of the Hindus. In one sentence, he diagnosed the cause of this disparity between profession and practice, between philosophy and work-a-day life: "India's doom was sealed the very day they discovered the word Mleccha (the alien)[1] and stopped from communion with others."

Harmony of Religions

Like his Guru Ramakrishna, whose varied experiments in the realm of spirit taught him that if one religion is true, all the rest are true, he was a firm believer in the harmony of all religions, in the basic unity of their aspirations.

An able exponent of this message of harmony and synthesis at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September 1893, Vivekananda woke as it were from obscurity to world-fame. In a very real sense, he belongs not to his religion of birth but to all historic religions. Whoever attempts out of love for narrow ideas to make a sect out of him mars the man as well as the message, kills the monkey and the mosquito by one stroke as the popular story has it.

Let us hear Vivekananda speak through the pages of his published works:

> "Holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world . . . every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character . . . upon the banner of every religion will soon be written in spite of resistance:
>
> "Help and not Fight,"
> "Assimilation and not Destruction,"
> "Harmony and Peace and not dissension,"[2]
>
> and I am sure the truth will be driven home without much difficulty.

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[1] For translation within bracket, which is not Vivekananda's, the author is responsible.
[2] Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-I pp. 21-22.

No Patience for Otherworldly Religious Cults

But his religion was essentially humanistic and he had not much patience for an otherworldly religious outlook oblivious of the material needs of the common man. He said in no uncertain terms that if religion cannot wipe off the tears of a widow and give a morsel of bread to the hungry, he is no believer in it or in a God that gives it succour. Unlike most other religious reformers, he was extremely eager to improve the living standard of the masses in this subcontinent through scientific means and in his youthful zeal once observed that he would have changed its face if he could get what he considered adequate funds for its rapid industrialization.

Synthesis of Matter and Spirit

An advocate of the synthesis of science and religion, he was no less a believer in the basic identity of matter and spirit. For him, there is no watertight barrier between matter and spirit, between natural forces and the spiritual energy behind the universe. In a London speech, he puts his finger on this topic and candidly observes:

"The materialist is right. There is but one. Only he calls that one Matter, and I call it God."[1] In this one, simple sentence of Vivekananda might be found the key to the badly needed synthesis of science and religion on which sober men and women all the world over are striving hard to put the highest premium.

Meeting of East and West

With him, the aim of this synthesis was a merger of the East and the West, not on the basis of begging and bossing but on the secure foundation of 'give and take'. With unfailing vigour, he pleaded for the unity of man, for a world-civilization in which, what he calls rightly or wrongly I do not know, the spiritualist East, the East dominated by traditional religion and the materialist West, the West dominated by modern science and technology, will merge in a general symphony.

This message of synthesis he preached without fear and tried to work it out in a separatist world to a fault addicted to the hatred-cult of Rudyard Kipling as expressed in his oft-repeated dictum:

"East is East and
West is West,
And the Twain
Shall never meet."

At least in the sphere of ideas and aspirations of man, he brought the East and the West closer when the "Changeless East" was unfortunately

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[3] Sister Nivedita: *The Master as I Saw Him*, pp. 18-19

enough a fertile soil for exploitation by its younger brother, the ever-changing industrialized West.

One-World and the United Nations

Thanks to the destructive ingenuity of science, the need of unity of man is being keenly felt today in all sane and sober quarters. But for this the human house already divided against itself might collapse. Naturally enough, the substitute for Vivekananda's Gospel of a cultural synthesis of the East and the West is being sought of late in a one-world and many, of whom I claim to be one, are tempted to visualize its early beginning in the United Nations with all its limitations. Assuredly in a world-understanding based on an abiding sense of unity of man and of human interest, material as well as spiritual, lies the future of man. Vivekananda lived and died for this. On its practical aspect and in its widest perspective, this sums up his message.

Unfortunately enough when science has made the world so small for us, when our thoughts as well as acts should, in the durable interest of man, be world-wide, we suffer often enough badly from a lack of spiritual cohesion and understanding. To achieve this, we must look to a philosophy of unity with broad human sympathy and unalloyed love for man as a species for inspiration and guidance.

Vivekananda's Vision of the Next Phase of Civilisation

In a new role, the role of a philosopher of history, Vivekananda tries to elaborate the same theme with the insight of a philosopher, a historian and a social scientist all rolled into one. In a small but highly revealing book in Bengali on the philosophy of history, a field of study not known much in this part of the world before him, he has made an analysis of the history of man to show that the next phase of civilisation will be characterized by the growth of the proletariate who will dominate in human affairs. Almost like an up-to-date advocate of economic liberation of the masses, he finds that the prevailing economic structure dependent on individual enterprise will be substituted by a socialist economy based on collective ventures in the collective interest. He finds this to be the inevitable corollary of the law of human history.

But this he does with a palpable difference from the extremists who in their scale of values tried to put as against spirit all the weight on matter as the most powerful ideological force shaping the destiny of man. Naturally enough, he derives his inspiration for a better world from a philosophy of unity of man and, its ethical counterpart, the Gospel of universal love which forms the sum and substance of the spiritual wisdom of man. This follows perhaps from his vision of the great logical link between the idea of universal friendship, *Maitrī*, *Métta* of Buddha and the notion of oneness of the universe (*Sarvātmabhāva*) depicted with touching earnestness in the Upanishads.

An Inveterate Advocate of the Middle of the Road Method

If he could be called a prophet in an age which does not feel much enamoured of prophethood, he was a prophet of the common man. If he could be called a saviour in an age which has not much fascination for salvation, he was a saviour of the common man. And if he could be called a revolutionary in an age which almost always visualises the future of man in terms of a revolution, his revolt was against suppression and exploitation in all walks of life and in all forms. Yet he was not an extremist but a great advocate of equilibrium between warring forces of life: reason and faith, matter and spirit, individual and society, science and religion, the past and the present, the East and the West and last but not least, haves and have-nots.

The recent developments in human relations in their widest perspective unmistakably indicate that man's future lies not in conflict but in understanding, not in strife but in unity, not in dissension but in agreement and, definitely, not in war but in peace. I firmly believe a return to the philosophy of unity, after a prolonged excursion into the mazes of unmitigated materialism, of which Vivekananda was assuredly an inveterate champion, will help grow a sense of solidarity in man, and make for a better world, for durable peace.

Sect, the Great Trap

But I must end with a word of warning whose substance could be traced in the dictum of Islam:

"Verily, there is no God but God to be worshipped." We must not forget that it is not the man but the message, not the person but the ideal behind, that finally counts and helps man go forward. Otherwise 'immortal ideas' might be reduced into 'mortal flesh' and a sect might flourish on the ideas of a man who was one of the greatest enemies of sect in human history.

Thank you.

A NEW RELIGION OF THE AGE

Saila Kumar Mukherjee
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My knee shakes and heart throbs to stand as the last speaker on this rostrum of momentous platform of the Parliament of Religions convened by the All-India Vivekananda Centenary Committee. I am conscious of my limitations to address a gathering of leaders of thought in a Parliament of Religions where before me have preceded eminent thinkers on religion from different parts of the world belonging to different faiths. But I am deeply grateful to Swamijis for their kindness and affection in asking me to speak on the teachings and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda at numerous Centenary Celebrations throughout the year. A new movement of thought and a new religion of the age started by this great Master and Disciple cannot be touched by me unless I refer briefly to the background of its foundation towards the end of the nineteenth century. I and many others call it a new religion primarily because it accepts and embraces all religions—discards none, criticises none and forsakes none but adopts all as so many different paths leading to the same goal viz. the spiritual hankering from time immemorial to realise God and attain divinity and to know who am 'I'.

Hundred years is a drop in the ocean of eternity. A spiritual messiah spreads his gospel of truth, love and religion through a span of centuries. The ideas and teachings he leaves behind gain momentum with the passage of time. This is just the first centenary of the chosen spiritual disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Many centenaries will have to follow to enable more votaries to adopt the dynamic religion—a new religion of the age. "As many faiths are but as many paths that lead to the same goal—the attainment of divinity"—"the realisation of the manifestation of God in beings, and service to man as the highest form of worship of God"—Swami Vivekananda himself said—"I leave for you food for 1500 years." So, this is just the beginning. As time rolls on and centuries pass on, the world and mankind would perhaps realise the message of Swami Vivekananda and adopt this new religion. As St. Paul was to Christ, as Arjuna to Sri Krishna, as Ananda to Buddha, as Nityananda to Sri Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna needed a Vivekananda to spread and preach to the world the gospel of his new religion of universal harmony and worship by service. Through Vivekananda Centenary celebrations therefore, throughout the length and breadth of this land and in countries abroad, we and particularly the Ramakrishna Mission are only endeavouring to infuse into the minds of the sceptic and vacillator in this trouble-tossed modern world the efficacy of the doctrine of oneness or the divinity in man. That is the highest teaching of Vedanta preached by Swami Vivekananda not only in this country but in the materialistic West for the lasting benefit and peace of the world and humanity.

Therefore, to speak on Vivekananda we cannot but refer with reverence to his great Master and Guru Sri Ramakrishna and how the Guru selected his disciple, how he was initiated to his spiritual doctrine, how both appraised each other through trials and tests, and how ultimately at the last moment of his life he unfolded to his disciples his real self as Avatar and Naren—the premonastic Vivekananda—knew and realised who was his Master. In the spiritual history of mankind, this selection and searching, this test and training, this realisation and knowing through a period of intimate relationship between master and disciple—there is hardly any parallel and is unique in the history of religious movement of the world.

It would not be out of place to narrate briefly the mysterious events that shaped the birth and childhood of this great personage who was to usher in a new age of glory and splendour for his country. His parents belonged to a rather well-to-do family of Calcutta. His mother, a pious lady, made necessary offerings and prayers to Vireshwar Shiva that a son might be born to her. She saw in her dream that Lord Shiva arose out of his transcendent meditation and took the form of a male child who was to be her son and in due time her son was born and the light of the world dawned for the first time upon future Vivekananda on Monday, January 12, 1863. The boy had a great fancy for wandering monks and deep meditation was the pastime of young Naren. Though it was a play, it gradually awakened in him spiritual emotions. From his early age, caste was a mystery to the boy. In school and college he left his mark for his great intellectual talents and prodigious memory. As a young student of sixteen Naren was well-versed in the doctrines and tenets of Western and Eastern philosophy. John Stuart Mill, Spencer and Hegel were reeling in his brain. But that did not satisfy him. His inward spiritual urge to be conscious of divine reality and to gain the vision of God held mastery over him. In his longing to know the path, he ran to Brahmo Samaj, but he was not satisfied. He ran to Maharshi Debendra Nath who lived in retirement on the banks of the Ganges, and straight away put the question—"Have you seen God ?" Naren came away disappointed. He went to the leaders of other religious sects, but no one of them could say that he had seen God. Naren decided to go to Dakshineswar to see Sri Ramakrishna. From Naren's own utterances the records of the first visit to the Master are of tremendous significance as to who Vivekananda was and what his mission would be.

The Master said—"Aye. You come so late. How could you be so unkind as to keep me waiting so long ? I yearn to unburden my mind to one who can appreciate my innermost experience." Then amid sobs he went on with folded hands and addressed Naren—"Lord ! I know you are that ancient sage—Nara—the incarnation of Narayana—born on earth to remove the miseries of mankind", and so on. The sceptic Naren was taken aback—"I have come to a man who is stark mad." But visits were repeated at frequent intervals. Naren sat by his Master and watched him and found that there was nothing wrong in his words, movements or behaviour. He used the most simple language. Naren went close to him and boldly asked the straight question—"Have you seen God, Sir ?" "Yes" was the answer. "I see him just as I see you here today. God can be realised. One can see and talk to him, as I am doing with you." Naren was impressed and he said within himself—"The first time I find a man who dares say with conviction that he has seen God." But still doubts persisted, as he could not reconcile his words with his strange conduct with him and came to the conclusion that he was a mono-maniac. With such conflicting thoughts he returned to Calcutta from Dakshineswar. He was still hesitant to accept him as a teacher. A month later, Dakshineswar again attracted him, and the description of that momentous meeting was given by Naren himself to his brother disciples. At the touch of the Master he got a novel experience within him. After the magic touch Naren began to regard Sri Ramakrishna not as a mad man, but as the only sane man among lunatics of the world who dwell in the abode of selfishness and desire bound down in the prison-houses of lust and gold. His faith in asceticism and renunciation was strengthened by coming in contact with the Master. He devoted himself with heart and soul to the task of realising God but only after a searching analysis of the Master's realisation and mode of life. For nearly six years this relationship between the Guru and the disciple through trials and tests, through questions and answers, through love and affection went on. Little by little Naren was led from doubt to beatitude, from darkness to light, from anguish of mind to the certainty of bliss, from the sultry vision of the world to the grand expanse of universal oneness. The great spiritual Vivekananda was in the making.

Before I pass on to the next phase of Vivekananda's life, it would not be out of place to refer to one day's normal conversation at Dakshineswar amongst his lay disciples. Thakur was in Samadhi—a trance. Topic of discourse was man's highest duty. Some said—"Devoted utterance of Mantra". Some said "Worhsip of the Baishnavas". Some said, "Piety to creatures". Sri Ramakrishna awoke from his trance and rebuked them all saying—"You are the humblest of the humble. Who are you to show charity or do piety to God's creatures—say the highest duty is 'To serve all creatures as manifestations of divinity". Every one of his disciples heard him say

"शिवज्ञाने जीवसेवा". But Naren coming out of the room told his brother disciples this—"What strange light I could see today in Thakur's words ! What he said in trance only means that 'You can harness Vedanta from the forest to your own hearth and home. Man may do whatever he likes, but let him believe above all that God is manifested before him in his creation and creatures. When man learns to serve all creatures believing them to be divine, his heart will be purified and he will learn to realise that he is part and parcel of that divinity as a soul free from restraints'. If God gives me an opportunity, then what I have heard today, I shall preach that message of truth throughout the length and breadth of this world and shall charm all—be he learned or illiterate, rich or poor, high or low." Therefore he gave the clarion call from America to his countrymen—"God is manifest before you in various forms—Where else are you searching for God ? He serves God best, who loves His creatures." That is the essence of and key to the *New Religion.*

Let me now turn to Vivekananda—the Sannyasi and revolutionary saint of India. After the demise of his Guru, his short span of active life may be clearly divided into three broad divisions—Vivekananda the wandering monk of India, Vivekananda the Hindu monk and preacher in Western World and Vivekananda the founder of Ramakrishna Math. & Mission and dynamic spiritual leader of new India.

As a wandering monk or Sannyasi travelling for three years on foot throughout the length and breadth of this land from Calcutta to Cape Comorin, he came in contact with the vast masses of India and acquired a first-hand knowledge of the abysmal poverty of the Indian people as also of the glories of her ancient heritage embedded in various parts of this vast sub-continent. The paradox of the inheritors of an ancient glorious civilisation and their present degradation aroused in him questions for answer and solution. Meditating on the rocks, on sea-bed off Cape Comorin he saw visions and felt an inner urge and the need to go abroad by crossing the oceans to visit America. Help came unsolicited. He sailed for America not with a beggar's bowl, but inspired by a spiritual urge to contribute something to the material West on behalf of the spiritual East, and at the first utterances at the Chicago Parliament of Religions he captured the hearts of Americans and carried the whole Conference with him. For five long years he delivered through his thunderous voice the teachings of Vedanta to the Western World—which is nothing but 'Doctrine of oneness', by which all human beings irrespective of race, creed, clime and colour can be made to feel that they have immense possibilities of development only when they believe and realise that they are all part and parcel of the Supreme Divinity and that divine spark is in every human soul which has only to be kindled by deep meditation and spiritual exercise. Swamiji prophetically said—"The whole of the Western World is a volcano. It may burst tomorrow", and see the bursting of the two devastating World Wars and a murmuring of the third. He said—"The whole world wants spirituality, without it the world will be destroyed. The Western World have searched every corner of the World, but have found no respite. They have drunk deep of the cup of human pleasure and found its vanity. Now is the time of work, so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate the West". "Maladjustment of the present World", he said, "could only be resolved by harmonising the two ideas, viz. 'Materialism and Spiritualism'." In India and abroad therefore, he had the need to preach the new religion of the age—"The Universal harmony of all religions and faiths"—the blending of spiritualism and materialism. His visit to the Western World, therefore, served a two-fold purpose of bestowing the spiritualism of the East to the West, and bringing to India the blessings of materialism, viz. discoveries of science and technology and harnessing them to the benefits of humanity. A two-way traffic started flowing between the East and the West.

Coming back to India he had only six years of active life before he breathed his last at the age of 39. But, what dynamic forces were pressed into action during these six years—is beyond comprehension of common man. He drew up the charter of Ramakrishna Mission and Math and laid its foundation at Belur starting originally at a rented house at Baranagore. The seed he had sown in 1898 has grown up into a huge tree with its branches spread over every corner of the globe including every part of India. It has created a band of missionaries who preach and practise the new religion of the age, religion of universal harmony and worship through service.

During these six years of active life as a revolutionary saint of India, there is no subject of human conception on which he did not write or speak or devote his thought. These are some of the subjects on which he wrote thoughtful articles for the benefit of posterity: Knowledge, Bhakti, Karma, Yoga, Soul, Brahma, Vedanta, Upanishad, Gita, Guru, Faith, God, Religion, Education, Morality, Duty, Concentration, Meditation, Mind and Thought, Food, Happiness, Domestic life, Woman, Spiritualism, Idolatry, Incarnation, Non-violence, Buddha and Buddhism, Christ and Christianity, Muhammad and Islam, Hindu and Hinduism, Cause of India's downfall, India's distinctiveness, Path of India's awakening and each and every one of these writings is based on the centrifugal force of 'Dharma' or Religion.

It was, therefore, truly said by Rabindranath to Romain Rolland—"If you want to know India, read Vivekananda", and Romain Rolland after reading said—"Going through the pages of the writings of Vivekananda at this distance of 30 years, I feel an electric shock within my nerves." All makers of Modern India—Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sri Arabinda, Rabindranath, Subhas Chandra, Radhakrishnan—have in unequivocal language expressed their indebtedness to Vivekananda and acknowledged him as the pioneer of a new movement of thought, preacher of a new religion of the age that has given us a shaking and self-reliance in our glorious past and has set the entire world to rethink and replan their life on the spiritual urge in man. Rabindranath has by his beautiful and wonderful expression summed up the essence of Vivekananda's religion. He said, "Vivekananda preached that there is the power of Brahman in every human being. What a grand message."

These year-long Centenary celebrations will fulfil their purpose, if through them and through the Parliament of Religions we can re-kindle our faith in Swamiji's teachings and Thakur's message, if we can re-dedicate ourselves to the various noble tasks on which Swamiji wanted us to concentrate our attention and work, and if there is a complete re-thinking in our mind on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda through the pages of voluminous writings left for generations unborn. May Thakur give the nation and the people of the World his blessings to realise those objectives.

Let us not forget that 'Dharma' or Religion is the centrifugal force of all our thoughts and actions. Let us not forget that that Dharma or Religion is not the Dharma or Religion of the kitchen of exclusion and seclusion, but the wider Dharma of universal love, tolerance and harmony and synthesis. Let us learn to acquire that strong mind and develop a spirit within the framework of a body composed of "muscles of iron and nerves of steel"—mind shaped on the dynamic inspiration of religion.

Let us hope therefore that this Parliament of Religions convened by the Vivekananda Centenary Committee will justify its usefulness and utility by a complete realisation that teachings of Vedanta can be carried into each man's everyday life—the city life, the country life, the national life and the home life of every nation. Swamiji did not believe in that religion which cannot give a hungry mouth its bread in this world but would give him bliss in heaven. "Religion," he said, "must be ready and able to help him in whatever condition he is, in servitude and in freedom, in the depths of degradation or on the heights of purity; everywhere equally it should come to his aid. The principles of Vedanta or ideals of religion whatever you may call it will be fulfilled by its capacity for performing that great function."

Let us hope and pray that the World will march a step further towards that goal of spiritual awakening after hundred years of Vivekananda's birth.

CHAPTER V

RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA ON THE HARMONY OF ALL RELIGIONS

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Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda not only preached the harmony of all religions, but their lives also were the harmonious blending of many religions. Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated the essential unity of all religions in his life by experimenting with many different religions and proving that in all cases the result was the same, namely, the realisation of God. But before he came to preach his catholic doctrine of the unity of all religions, the followers of different faiths in India and abroad were at war with one another. Each religious community thought that it was only its own religion that was true and could lead to salvation, while all others were false and would bring eternal damnation. First, there was the general conflict between the believers in the formless, nameless and qualityless Brahman and the worshippers of a Personal God with name, form and quality. This is the historic conflict between the religion of the formless Absolute (nirākāra) and the religion of Personal God with forms (sākāra). This leads in practice to the conflict between the religious paths of meditation (yoga), knowledge (jñāna), work (karma) and devotion to God (bhakti). Then among the worshippers of the Personal God there was much bitterness and quarrel among the devotees of Śiva, Viṣṇu, and Śakti or Kālī, of Hari, Rāma and Kriṣṇa. This is known as the conflict between Śaivism, Śāktism and Vaiṣṇavism. Lastly, there was the clash and conflict among the great religions of the world, like Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

It was in this tense atmosphere of religious discord in the world that Sri Ramakrishna discovered and taught the essential unity of all religions, and later on, Swami Vivekananda preached the gospel of the harmony of all religions in the East and the West. Sri Ramakrishna taught that all religions from the apparently crude image-worship to the contemplation of the formless Brahman are true and that they are all capable of leading their followers to the goal of the religious life, namely, God. The rationalists may condemn image-worship as idolatry. But they do not know that in the so-called image-worship what is really worshipped is not the material image, but the living, conscious God invoked and infused into the image. Even if it be the material image that is worshipped as a symbol of God, there is a necessity for such symbolic worship on the part of those who cannot think of the formless God. Then, granting that it is an error to worship images, God knows that it is He who is the object of worship through images and He will correct our error when He thinks it necessary; the rationalists need not worry about it. In truth, however, it is not an error. God is omnipresent, He is present in His material images as much as in any man who, we say, is made after the image of God. Swami Vivekananda also says that 'those who worship God through ceremonials and forms, however crude we may think them, are not in error. It is the journey from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth.' So the worship of God through forms and images is in a sense the worship of God Himself as much as the worship of the formless God.

As for the conflict and quarrel between Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism, Sri Ramakrishna reconciles them in the light of his spiritual experiences of God as revealed in different forms. It is on the firm ground of such experiences that he says that Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti are only different forms of the same reality and that God reveals Himself in different forms, according as His devotees love to see Him in this or that form. The Hindu scriptures also bear testimony to the truth that these different forms pertain to the same reality and are only called by different names. God as sat-cit-ānanda is called Brahman in the Veda, Śiva in the Tantra and Kriṣṇa and Rāma in the Purāṇas. The Vaiṣṇava scripture also affirms that Kriṣṇa had become Kālī. Thus Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism along with Vedāntism are founded on a fundamental belief in the same sat-cit-ānanda, although they call it by different names. So there need be no quarrel but amity among the followers of such different religions as Vedāntism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śāktism.

Coming next to the Vedāntic religions we find that the Advaita, Dvaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita schools strongly criticise and condemn one another. For Advaita, Brahman is impersonal, indeterminate, formless and qualityless. But for Dvaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita, He is a determinate personal being possessing forms and qualities. For Advaita, liberation consists in realisation of the self's identity with Brahman and is to be attained only through jñāna or knowledge of Brahman and never through karma or work and bhakti or devotion to God. But for the Dvaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita liberation is a state of blissful communion with God and can be finally attained only by means of bhakti or devotion to God, although it may be based on previous jñāna or knowledge and karma or work.

Now let us see how Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda reconcile Advaita, Dvaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita. Brahman, says Sri Ramakrishna, is both indeterminate and determinate, formless and possessed of forms, impersonal and personal. The same reality in its state of inactivity or static being (nitya-rūpa) is indeterminate and impersonal, and in its sportive creative activity (līlā-rūpa) is determinate and personal. We realise the same God when we experience Him as impersonal being or as the supreme person, just as we know the same man when we see him sleeping or acting. So also Swami Vivekananda says: "God is personal and impersonal at the same time. The impersonal God is a living God, a principle. Even man may be said to be both personal and impersonal. Man as soul or spirit is infinite and impersonal; but as living in a body, he is a finite person." So he thinks that the Advaita is not antagonistic but friendly to Dvaita and other schools of the Vedānta. "Dualism and all systems that had preceded it, are accepted by the Advaita not in a patronising way, but with the conviction that they are true manifestations of the same truth, and that they all lead to the same conclusions as the Advaita has reached."

Then we find in Ramakrishna-Vivekananda a happy reconciliation of the four paths to liberation, namely, yoga, jñāna, karma and bhakti. All these paths, Sri Ramakrishna says, lead to the same goal, namely, God. What the yogins call ātman and what they realise by yoga or psychic concentration is the same as what the Advaitins call Brahman, and realise by jñāna and the Dvaitins and Viśiṣṭādvaitins call Bhagavān, and finally realise by bhakti. The ways may be different, but the goal reached is the same. So there is no real ground of conflict among them. Rather, they should all be accepted and respected as serving the needs of different men with different tastes and temperaments.

Swami Vivekananda not only recognises the value of these different paths for different men, he would fain combine them all in one ideal path of religion for all men. Thus he says that there are various grades and types of human minds in the world, for whom these different paths must be laid and accepted, if we are not to force them all to follow the same path of religion and thereby stultify and arrest their spiritual development. He says further that for the Vedāntist 'God is existence, knowledge and Bliss Infinite. But existence without knowledge and love, cannot be; knowledge without love, and love without knowledge cannot be. So what we want is the harmony of all these—existence, knowledge and love. We want harmonious, not one-sided development. This means that the path of religion is a harmony of jñāna or knowledge, karma or work and bhakti or love of God. Then, again, in his ideal of a universal religion what Swami Vivekananda wants to propagate is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action.' To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions is his ideal of religion. This ideal, he thinks, is attained by what we, in India, call Yoga or union with its four divisions of karma, jñāna, bhakti and rāja or the way of psychic control and concentration. Although this is the ideal of religion, Swami Vivekananda admits that any one of these paths, if followed sincerely, will lead to liberation. Thus he says: 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these —and be free'.

We lastly come to the conflict among the great religions of the world like Hinduism, Christianity and Islam and consider the way in which they are reconciled by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. In the light of his experiments with these among many other religions, Sri Ramakrishna declares that all of them lead to the realisation of the same God. 'So many religions,' he says, 'are so many paths to the temple of God. Let all men and women sincerely follow their own religions as true, but never think that only their religions are true and all others are false. All religions are true, all lead to the same God'.

Swami Vivekananda goes further than his master and asserts that all these religions have their own missions to perform in the history of the world. Each religion represents a great truth, each represents a particular excellence—something which is its soul. The fact that all these old religions are living today proves that they have kept their missions intact, their ideals high and their souls alive. Islam makes its followers all equal, that is its special excellence. Mohammedanism comes to preach to the world the practical brotherhood of all its followers. Hinduism stands for spirituality and preaches that the real man is the spirit or the self in him and that God is to be directly experienced within our self and not in the high heaven above. Renunciation and spirituality are the two great ideals of Hinduism, and it will live despite all its mistakes and perversions so long as these ideals live. In Christianity also the central ideas are those of purity, prayer and preparedness by all means for the coming of the Lord, for the Kingdom of Heaven. So long as Christians keep to that ideal their religion lives. So our attitude towards these and all other religions should be one of acceptance, not mere tolerance. As Swami Vivekananda says: "I accept all religions that were in the past and worship with them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him." Not only this, he goes further and says, 'I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future, for God's book is still a continuous revelation, going on'. Let the whole world listen to this message of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and live by it, so that all religions may live and flourish in harmony and peace.

SUFI-ISM IN INDIA

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Sufi-ism infiltrated into India immediately after its coming into being. Though originally a product of Islam, it developed under the influence of Greek philosophy, Persian religion and Indian thought both Buddhistic and Hindu. The Islamic conception of God failed to satisfy persons of spiritual tendencies, as there was an exaggerated consciousness of subservience to God and an overwhelming dread of divine retribution, which made them fear God more than love Him and submit unreservedly to His will.

The early sufis were almost all of non-Semitic origin and the psychology of their own race affected their new faith. For them the doctrines of Islam were unphilosophic and they felt compelled to interpret Islam in the light of their old faith. Thus sufism was taken to be a revolt against dogmatic Islam. It found its source beyond the strongly-guarded four walls of Islam and was a psychological reaction of the different peoples especially Persians against its forcible imposition on them.

In the early years of the ninth century, Bayazid of Bistam was so captivated by the Vedantic conception of God that he used to say, 'Glory to me ! How great my majesty ! Verily I am God; there is no God beside me, so worship me.' Surely, no orthodox Muslim could dare to say like this. Bayazid first propounded the theory of '*fana*' i.e. absolute annihilation in the divine and it was further developed into '*Anal Haqq*' i.e. I am God by Mansur al-Hallaj, who paid a visit to India and imbibed the philosophy of Vedanta. Hindu legends were transformed into Islam and pilgrimage, a Hindu practice emphasised by Shankar by establishing four maths in Badarikashrama, Puri, Dwarka and Shringeri, was also introduced. Sufi-ism borrowed the '*tariqat*' or path from Indian philosophy. Before being '*fana fi'llah*' or complete identification with God, a sufi seeker must tread by slow stages, the '*tariqat*' to reach '*haqiqat*' or truth.

The sufis of the Bayazid school were tolerant towards all and attached no importance to Islamic dogmas. They were considered heretics and were often hanged or exiled. To avoid the fury of the orthodox and to save their lives, the sufis considered it expedient to recognize Muhammad as their ideal and tried to deduce their thought from the allegorical and cryptic sayings of the Quran.

After the introduction of Islam in northern India, the sufis infiltrated into the country. This was the only peaceful, friendly and tolerant element of Islam as against its propagation by sword and by aggressive *ulemas* and *qazis*, which was vehemently abhorred by the Hindus. The Islam represented by the sufis appealed to the Hindus and all willing mass-conversions were no doubt the result of sufi preaching. Even in Akbar's time, there were fourteen different orders of sufis here, as India became a very hospitable refuge for them according to Abul Fazl.

As to the introduction of sufi-ism in India, the legends go to state that a Hindu saint, Baba Ratan, visited Mecca twice and on both occasions, he met Muhammad, first when Muhammad was in his early life and then again after he became a prophet. Baba Ratan's name is mentioned as a companion of Muhammad by Ibn Hajar Asqalani. Similar legends are popular about Bibi Pakdamanan, who belonged to the family of Hussain, the grandson of the prophet. The grave of Bibi Pakdamanan is in Lahore and Mahmud of Ghazni and Akbar both venerated it and added to its constructions.

In the beginning, the sufis in northern India were preachers and they preceded the Muslim invaders and often prepared ground for them by converting the lower grades of the Hindus, who were unfortunately neglected by the higher classes. They sometimes joined hands with the rulers to establish their power and to convert the people to Islam.

Later on, the Indian sufis gave up their missionary zeal and devoted themselves to the study of different religious systems and philosophies of the country. They even questioned the superiority of their own faith and some even denied its authority. Mian Mir, who laid the foundation-stone of the Sikh temple at Amritsar, was much attracted towards Guru Har Gobind, the sixth guru of the Sikhs.

The intolerance and bigotry of Aurangzeb drove the spiritually and the intellectually minded sufis towards Hinduism more than before. Shah Inayat and Bullhe Shah expressed themselves in Hindu terminology. Bhagavatism influenced their ideas and they believed that save God there was no reality; all else was illusion or *maya*. The doctrine of transmigration and re-incarnation was adopted and supplemented by the theory of karma.

Muhammad remained the perfect model of man for sufis elsewhere; but in India, the sufis took Krishna of Bhagavat lore as their hero and themselves as his female friends. A sufi was the wife or a consort of God and ever tried to win His love as against sufis elsewhere who took God as their beloved.

The above developments in sufi-ism necessitated a new classification among them. They can be classed into three schools of thought:

1. *The Orthodox School:* The sufis of this class believed in the proselytisation from one religion to another. They considered Quran to be the best book revealed and Muhammad the greatest prophet born.

This class tolerated other religions, but it believed Islam to be the only true creed.

2. *The Philosophical School:* The sufis of this category were thinkers and speculators. To them the differences of religion, country and sect were immaterial. They abhorred the dogmas of all religions and displayed pantheism. They were indifferent to conversion and were responsible for forging unity between the faithful of various religions.
3. *The Popular School:* The adherents of this class were men of little or no education. They collected beliefs and superstitions of various faiths and preached and practised them. Muhammad remained their only prophet and Quran their best book; but they provided a place for all other prophets and teachers in the long list of their saints. They were popular both with Hindus and Muslims. To the Hindus, they preached the Quran and to the Muslims, the popular beliefs and superstitions of both. As they were liable to change with the times and conditions, they were dangerous equally to Islam and to Hinduism.

The sufis in India, in their compositions, borrowed only very few Arabic and Persian expressions and mostly employed the vocabulary and terms of local trades and cottage industries. In India the towns and villages were more or less self-supporting units. All the necessities of life were in those times produced by the people themselves. The sayings of the Indian sufis bore strong impact of their surroundings. Cotton industry was very common in towns and villages of northern India and this cotton manufacture comprised three processes:

1. Cleaning and carding of cotton and making small rolls ready for spinning.
2. Spinning i.e., turning cotton into yarn which was the exclusive job of the women.
3. Weaving mostly done by men, though feminine aid was also used.

In the technique employed by the sufi, he considered this world to be a spinning-wheel and his own self, the young girl, who was supposed to spin and prepare her dowry. The good actions were like spinning and the yarn thus spun was the dowry which he, like the young maiden, was to carry to the husband i.e., God. As a husband lived happily with the wife who brought him a self-spun dowry and was proficient in spinning, so did God love the sufi who died with a good karma and possessed qualities befitting a soul striving for good. But like that obstinate and short-sighted girl, who ignoring the future consequences, squandered away her time in useless sport and replied to her mother's remonstrances by pretences that the spinning-wheel was out of order, the ignorant and indolent sufi made excuses for his indulgence in worldly pleasures. In the end, like the idle young girl, he was ignored by the beloved and the divine union was denied him. Thereupon he bewailed and described the pangs of divine separation.

Among the sufis in India, besides those belonging to various regular orders, there was Dara Shikoh, the heir-apparent of Shah Jahan, who was ruthlessly murdered by Aurangzeb for his efforts to bridge the gulf between Hinduism and Islam. He wrote the *Majma-ul-Bahrain*, 'the mingling of the two oceans' in which he embodied the elements of synthesis which adorn both the religions and he translated fifty Upanishads into Persian, a work which first introduced Indian philosophy in the West. He translated the Bhagavad-Gita and the Yoga Vashishtha also into Persian and for his conciliatory efforts and so-called heretic deeds, he was done to death by his brother. Sarmad, a Jew from Iran converted to Islam was another sufi who suffered death at the hands of Aurangzeb. Chandra Bhan Brahmin was a Hindu sufi and a Persian scribe of Shah Jahan, who was attached to Dara Shikoh. Baba Lal Dial Bairagi and Mian Mir influenced the life of Dara Shikoh, whereas in earlier times, Salim Chishti was the saint revered by Akbar the Great.

Of the traditional orders, from among the Chishtis, the names of Muin-ud-din, Qutb-ud-din, Farid-ud-din Shakar Ganj, Nizam-ud-din Aulia, Piran Kalir and Abdul Quddus Gangohi are quite well known and Baha-ud-din Zakaria, Syed Jalal-ud-din of Uch, Makhdum Jahanian and Burhan-ud-din Qutb-i-Alam distinguished themselves in the Suhrawardy order. Muhammad Ghaus was the eminent sufi of the Shattari order and from among the Qadiri order, Hazrat Mian Mir was the jewel of a sufi who laid the foundation-stone of the Golden Temple of Amritsar and was held in great esteem by Guru Har Gobind as also by Prince Dara Shikoh. The Naqshbandi order is represented by Mujaddid-i-Alif-i-Sani, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali-ul-Hujwairi, born in the last decade of the tenth or the first decade of the eleventh century, was the first sufi who wrote a book on sufi-ism in Persian. He was a great advocate of celibacy and himself never married. He always writes disparagingly about the women. He settled down in Lahore and died there in 1063 or 1071 A.D. He wielded a great influence on sufis in India and it was believed that even after his death, he could fulfil the desires of his devotees.

No doubt the sufis in India attracted a large number of the lower stratum of Hindu society towards Islam and also evolved the very religion of Sikhism; but sufi-ism in itself underwent a change beyond recognition. The Vedanta philosophy captured the minds of the sufi, the Bhakti movement influenced their ideas with which they interpreted Islam as tolerant and accommodating. In the annual congregations held on the tombs of these sufis, Hindus and Muslims alike participate to do honour to these men of God, who tried to forge a unity between different communities of India and who are today a common cultural heritage and not an exclusive monopoly of any one community or religion.

REASON AND REVELATION

SWAMI HIRANMAYANANDA

The subject for my discussion is: Reason and Revelation. Reason has been defined as 'the relational element in intelligence in distinction from the element of content, sensational or emotional.' But revelation is the process by which God makes known to man the truth. This process is not based on reason. Revelation comes to a fortunate few.

Revelation is at the basis of all religions. The founders of all the principal religions of the world claim that the truth of their doctrines had been revealed to them in super-sensory perception. At the same time they, also, say that their experience is personal and unique and cannot be vouchsafed to any other person. The lot of the common man is to accept the revelation and follow the mandates of the great man.

Naturally, this position does not satisfy the rational faculty of an intellectual man. With progressive march of science in the last century Religion came to be at a discount. Because scientific method was based on the three principles: (1) Observation (2) Verification and (3) Generalisation. So, this clearly contradicted the method of religion which asked people to accept its teachings on faith. According to Prof. Thompson people take to religion because of (1) baulked struggle (2) strained emotion and (3) baffled enquiry. So, it has a different frame of reference. This position was not very satisfying to the intellectual man.

In India, however, religion has never been said to be private and personal property of any particular person. The Vedic seer declared—"वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम्"—"I have known this Great Person." At the same time he added "तमेव विदित्वातिमृत्युमेति"—"by knowing Him you can transcend death." So, this experience should be acquired by all. Elsewhere in the Upanishads it has been said:—"आत्मा वा अरे द्रष्टव्यः" —"this Atman is to be seen or experienced." This is the *sine qua non* of spiritual life in India.

Though this rational basis of verification has formed the bedrock of Hindu religion, yet, it was not very articulate. Hence cobwebs of superstition, dogmatism and authoritarianism have gathered round it. It was given to Swami Vivekananda to clear up this debris by the limelight irradiation of his vast intellect and to enunciate and reveal the rational basis of the Hindu religion. In his Raja-Yoga Swami Vivekananda says: "The teachers of the science of yoga, therefore, declare that religion is not only based upon the experience of ancient times, but that no man can be religious until he has the same perceptions himself. Yoga is the science which teaches us how to get these perceptions. It is not much use to talk about religion until one has felt it." Swami Vivekananda also says in the same book that the method of observation and verification can be and should be applied to religion. No one can challenge the validity of religious experience if he has not tried to demonstrate the truth of it in his own life by applying the scientific method to it. Similarly, no religious doctrine should be acceptable unless it can bear the test of scientific method. The yogas of the Hindu religion teach one to apply the scientific method in the sphere of religion and thus make its revelations rational. Moreover, Swami Vivekananda and his Guru Sri Ramakrishna say that all religions are true and they can be verified if one follows their teachings sincerely. So, reason and revelation are not contradictory, all revelations to be true must be verifiable by scientific method. And the verified revelations are rational.

RELIGION AND MYSTICISM

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Both 'Religion' and 'Mysticism' are much debated terms. I shall endeavour to present the least controversial definitions of the terms. By religion, I mean, a felt-practical relationship with what is apprehended as of supreme value in life. This definition satisfies all the three aspects of human mind, namely, thinking, feeling and willing. I prefer the expression "Supreme Value" to God, because by so doing, I can include Buddhism and Jainism which are non-theistic religions.

By mysticism, I mean an attitude or art of Union with Reality. The terms 'Union' and 'Reality' need some elucidation. The word 'Union' does not mean any vague, unintelligible or unimaginable mental operation. It is an intense and complete awareness which does not leave any gap between the knower and the known. We are said to have an intuition of a thing when we completely unite ourselves with it by a kind of interpenetration into it. This union is a kind of sympathetic participation which we notice in the case of an Artist who merges himself in his object of Art, or in the case of a lover who uses the expressions, 'I' and 'thou' indiscriminately.

The term 'Reality' does not however admit of a summary definition. For the present, I mean by Reality that which is not self-contradictory and transcends time and space and yet manifests itself through time and space.

The contention of my paper is that it is through mystical experience alone that the objectivity and validity of religion can be established. Let me consider at the very outset the objections brought forward by the rationalists and others against mysticism. It is sometimes held that mystical experience being totally subjective cannot be validated by any objective criterion. Secondly, one cannot communicate one's mystical experience to another. Lastly, one cannot distinguish between genuine mystical experience and an ecstasy which has a semblance of mystical experience. In reply, it may be pointed out that as we proceed from one scale of values to another, we must necessarily change our criterion, for otherwise, we shall fail to respect what is known as autonomy of categories. The sensory, the intellectual, the aesthetic are different planes of existence and each has its own categorical framework. For instance, I can say that I have purchased from the market ten k.g. of rice but I cannot say that I have purchased ten k.g. of beauty. Similarly, I can see the actual act of stealing committed by a thief, but I cannot 'see' the ethical badness of the action except figuratively. This shows that, as we proceed from one level to another we change our criteria and our categories. The criterion which I apply for ascertaining the truth of an empirical statement like "this table is made of teak-wood" cannot be applied to judge the value of a mystical experience. The mystical experience has a criterion of its own and if we venture to explain mystical experience by those standards which we employ in explaining non-mystical experience of the ordinary man, we shall commit the fallacy of explaining the higher by the lower. We shall, in other words, explain 'XB' merely as 'X' and thus leave 'B' unexplained. I venture to submit that a man who has never had the taste of mystical experience, never stands on any sure ground which enables him to deny the validity of mystical experience. In other words, he does not possess any legitimate ground for denial. I shall proceed to show that mystical experience is both objective and valid and for this I shall rely on the statements of the mystics of the world who have had no opportunity of meeting one another and exchanging their views. Secondly, I shall proceed to show that both in empirical and scientific statements there is an element of unshareable subjectivity which closely resembles the subjectivity of mystical experience. Consider, for example, the category of 'causality'. For the scientist the category of causality is objective, necessary and universal. Wherever there is regularity of succession between two events and certain other conditions are also fulfilled, he subsumes his experience under the category of causality. Nevertheless, when I have a burning sensation on putting my finger into fire, I am directly in touch with what is known as 'causal-efficacy'. This is unshareable. In other words, you cannot share my direct experience of a causal situation. The conclusion that emerges is this: the difference between the subjective and the objective is never absolute. Causality is an objective category, because each subject (in this case, the scientist) must necessarily employ the category of causality in order to impart coherence and consistency to his experience of the manifold. To that extent, objectivity is achieved. To put it bluntly: that which is necessarily accepted by all subjects (i.e. cognisers) is objective.

Let us now come to the world of the mystics. The mystics, like the scientists, have their own world. It must be granted that the mystical experiences of Eckhart have not been directly shared by Sri Ramakrishna or Kabir or Jalalluddin Rumi. Nevertheless, these experiences are objective inasmuch as they have made the lives of these saints noble and lofty, and have brought illumination and insight which are too precious to be thrown away.

The mystical experiences are neither illusions nor hallucinations. For, had they been so, they would have produced morbidity in the minds of the saints instead of ecstasy, and they would have produced spiritual blindness. Furthermore, as perceptual illusions are subsequently corrected, the mystical illusions, if any, would have certainly been corrected by the mystics themselves. It is said that Sivanath Sastri doubted the validity of the mystical experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and remarked that Sri Ramakrishna's trances were nothing but vague, unconscious states. To this Sri Ramakrishna replied that he meditated on pure consciousness, and pure consciousness cannot produce an unconscious state in his mind. The truth is that there is no illusion in mystical experience, there may be only grades of mysticism.

William James speaks of four broad marks of mystical experience. These are ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity. The mystic when asked to report his experience, states that it is indescribable, that is to say, it is indescribable in terms of ordinary logical categories. Although mystical experiences are similar to states of feeling, they have cognitive value also. Mystical experiences cannot be sustained for long. There are however exceptions, as in the case of Sri Ramakrishna. Mystical states are never merely interruptive. Some memory of their content always remains and inspires the mystic throughout his life.

Let me now compare the reports of the experiences of some mystics of the world and see how they compare.

Let us take a typical example of Sri Ramakrishna's mystic trance. Here we have his own words: "I could forget my indescribable pangs only by seeing the Mother in some form or other for the greater part of the day and night. Otherwise this body could not have survived. For six years, these eyes remained wide open, not a wink of sleep closed them. I could not close the eyelids, however much I tried to do so. I had no idea of time nor of the body. When the mind, at rare intervals, came down to a lower plane and I had a faint idea of the body, a shudder of pain would pass through me at the thought that I was going mad. Standing before a mirror, I would put my finger into my eyes to see if the eyelids would close but they would not. Horrified, I would often burst into tears and pray: 'Mother, is this the result of praying and of wholly surrendering myself unto thee'? But the next moment I would say 'Let it be as thou wisheth, let this body go to pieces, but leave me not. Thou art my only refuge'." Let us then hear Saint John of the Cross: "A single one of these intoxicating consolations may reward it for all the labours undergone in its life even were they numberless. Invested with an invincible courage and filled with an impassioned desire to suffer for its God, the soul is seized with a strange torment—that of not being allowed to suffer enough." We have the following from a great Muslim mystic thinker, Ibn Al Arabi: "The aim is unity of Being. All being is one and an absolute Unity. This absolute Being is unknowable by human intellect, no one except God Himself knows His real transcendent nature or fully comprehends essential unity. It is independent of all predications, for in it there is no duality of subject and object. This is called the state of Oneness." About Nirvana Buddha said: "There is a sphere where there is neither earth nor water, neither light nor air, neither infinity of consciousness nor nothingness. Space cannot hold it, for, it is without position, time cannot contain it, for, it is above change."

I need not multiply instances to tax your patience. All that I wish to emphasise is that although there are many historical religions with different metaphysical and mythological backgrounds, yet the mystics throughout the ages speak in the same voice. Religion speaks in many dialects, yet the content is the same. If we can cultivate detachment and sympathy we shall not fail to notice that though religion may take many forms yet its foundational character cannot be missed, once we care to understand the mystical experiences of the saints. It is sometimes said that unlike Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are associated with one particular person, Jesus in the case of Christianity and Mohammad in the case of Islam. I venture to submit that if we consider the statements of the Christian and Muslim mystics, we shall come near a new pathway to Reality. Humility and reverence, detachment and sympathy, insight and illumination are the virtues needed for understanding the mystics.

A witty Bishop in speaking to children is reported to have asked, 'What is the Cross ?' and answered the question himself by saying "It is the 'I' crossed out". Let us cross out the narrow selfish ego and stretch out our hands to the fellow pilgrims whose souls are not different from ours, but are basically identical with one another.

TOWARDS INTER-RELIGIOUS CO-OPERATION

EDWIN LUTHU COPELAND

Very simply, and from the standpoint of my own faith, let me suggest some ingredients for fruitful inter-religious relationships.

1. The first and the most basic ingredient is mutual respect and love on the part of the adherents of all the religions. Mutual love, if it is genuine, will cast out fear and suspicion and will exclude condescension. The basic facts about all religions are available at least to the extent of disabusing any of us of the notion that his own religion is the sole possessor of truth. Love and humility are surely enjoined by all the great religions, and we need to practice these attitudes in our relations with each other across religious lines.

2. A second ingredient is the insistence upon the fullest possible measure of religious freedom for everybody. Coercion has absolutely no room in religion, nor do the more subtle forms of violation of human personality in terms of the psychological manipulation of people for religious ends. My own religion, Christianity, after three centuries of noble response to persecution, came into possession of political power and prestige and became itself too often a persecutor. So we have the terrible blots on Christian history of Crusades and Inquisitions. Although I belong to a sub-division of Christianity one of whose cardinal principles is religious freedom and which has been persecuted but not persecuting in its history, I yet recognize my solidarity with all Christians and share their repentance for these terrible wrongs in our history.

Religious freedom includes the right not only to believe and practice one's faith but also to propagate it. Moreover it includes the right to refuse and reject any faith and to stand witness to this rejection.

Religious liberty means, furthermore, that religions are to be free to fulfil their own missions. All religions have some sense of mission which is perhaps the part of their essences. Much has been said in this conference about the obligation to share India's spiritual heritage with the West. Whatever sense of mission you in the East may have for showing us in the West your spiritual riches, I hope that you will fulfil it and that you will have zeal for its fulfilment.

Those who believe in the ultimate triumph of truth have no fear of a free society; and religions, above all, profess to believe in the power of truth.

3. Essential, also, to fruitful relationships between religions is an active effort at mutual understanding. Too long have we remained isolated and insulated from real understanding of each other. This kind of religious

provincialism is a luxury which we simply cannot afford in the constricted and explosive world of today.

Understanding of another religion is not easy. In fact, there is an esoteric quality in all religions, and in some more than in others, which no doubt makes the fullest understanding impossible to one who has not actually become an adherent and made the commitment required by the particular religion. Nevertheless, a significant measure of understanding is possible.

Such understanding requires an active effort at empathy, the willingness to stand within another faith and see it through the eyes of its devotees, in so far as this is possible. Especially important is the willingness to listen when a man of another faith interprets his own religion. Not only the scholars and leaders of world religions, but also the rank and file of religious people, in so far as they have opportunity and facilities for so doing, need to seek inter-religious understanding.

Mutual understanding and mutual love, which I mentioned as the first ingredient for fruitful inter-religious relationships, are dependent one upon the other: Love helps to make understanding possible, and understanding encourages love.

Perhaps our special hazard in the West, with our background of particularistic religions, is to refuse to allow another religion to be as lofty and noble as it actually is, so that we cannot demolish it and prove the superiority of our own faith. So we are tempted to interpret another religion at its worst and our own at its best. No doubt the more common danger for members of Indian religions is to re-interpret another's religion for him and make it over after one's own pattern in order to prove the essential identity of all religions. Real understanding is rendered impossible by compulsions to prove religious dogmas. What is needed is understanding which eschews all kinds of distortion.

4. Fourthly, there needs be a careful exploration of areas of inter-religious co-operation in the ethical and spiritual service of mankind.

Many sincere religious people are afraid of religious syncretism which would compromise their basic religious convictions. Indeed, facile and superficial agreements for the sake of seeming unity cannot serve the cause either of religion or truth. But surely we can join hands in the service to humanity.

Seeking to minister to human needs, which are yet of terrible proportions in this second half of the twentieth century, is a challenging field of inter-religious co-operation. Swami Vivekananda was expressing the true spirit of religion when he declared to his fellow disciples: "I travelled all over India. But, alas, it was agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears. It is now my firm conviction that to preach religion to them, without first trying to remove their poverty and suffering, is futile..." (R. C. Majumdar, ed., Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume, p. 162).

We can also unite in prophetic criticism of the evils that beset mankind. Religion is nothing if it is not ethical. Let us in the name of religion oppose all tyrannies which deny human freedom and degrade human dignity. Let us denounce all social evils, such as, for example, racism. Here, again, the Swamiji is a splendid example of the ethical prophet, crying out against the evils of his own society and castigating them in the bluntest language. Religions as existing in all societies need to speak with a united voice against the evils that plague mankind.

These are at least some of the areas for vital co-operation between religions, and serious exploration will no doubt discover more.

5. Finally, as Dr. Georg Fohrer suggested two days ago, perhaps the time has come for the creation of some continuing organisation for inter-religious co-operation. What is more fitting fruitage from the Parliament of Religions honouring the great apostle of harmony of religions, than some such instrument in which all religions, without violating their own integrity, could unite for the furtherance of their mutual understanding and their co-operation for the good of the world ?

THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS

MADAME SOPHIA WADIA

Let me recall the inspiring address of Swami Madhavanandji Maharaj, which struck the keynote for all our deliberations. It is an ardent appeal to us all to unite as men of true religion and to proclaim "the message of love, peace and brotherhood to a mad world." If sanity is to be regained we must cease to quarrel on the basis of differences of religious labels. This will demand, as the Inaugural Address points out, making "a distinction between spirituality, or the inner core of religion and formal religion." The inner core rests upon the living fact that man is a religious being because in him there is a spark of Divinity. The recognition of man's potential Divinity forms the essential basis of true religion. The outward forms of worship are non-essential. The difference between essential and non-essentials is, as Shri Ramakrishna declared, the same as between the grain of rice and the husk. Yet another distinction lies in the approach, the angle of vision, illustrated in the old and familiar story of the elephant and the six blind men.

"Once upon a time, six blind men happened to come near a standing elephant. They felt, with their hands, different parts of the huge animal, and began disputing about its nature. One caught the end of the tail, and said it was a big broom or brush. Another felt the trunk, and declared it was a huge pythom. A third found an ear, and affirmed that it was a very large winnowing-fan. A fourth touched the abdomen, and maintained it was a vast drum. A fifth stroked a leg, and asserted it was a thick column. A sixth grasped a tusk, and insisted it was a powerful pestle. A seventh person happened to pass, and saw them disputing. He had eyes, was a man of vision, a man of wisdom. He explained to them what it was; a compound of all their 'opinions'; and not a mechanical but a living composite; and owner and user of them all."*

And finally there is the difference of language. This is illustrated in another well-known story of the four pilgrims on the road and the fruit-vendor.

"Once upon another time, a Rūmī, an Arab, a Persian, and a Turk, happened to become Fellow-Travellers on the Road of Life. Long trudging on the dusty, sandy, stony, thorny, now ice-cold, now burning-hot, tracks, made them hungry and thirsty for the Nourishment that brings Strength and Peace. They did not know one another's mother-tongue. By signs they communicated, and brought out all the coins they had, to purchase food. What should they buy ? The Arab said, *Enab;* the Turk growled, *Uzam;* the Persian shouted, *Angūr;* the Rūmī roared, *Astāfīl.* Faces frowned; eyes reddened; fists clenched; blows began. An itinerant Fruit-Vendor passed along. Such blessed Vendors of Vital Nourishment know the few all-important sympathy-creating life-preserving words of many tongues. They have to deal with many customers of many sorts. He rushed in between, and placed before them his basket full of the Fruit of Life. Fists unclenched, voices sweetened, eyes softened, faces smiled. Each one found the Self-same Object of his Heart's Desire in that basket. Arabic *enab*, Turkish *uzam*, Irānī *angūr*, Rūmī *astāfīl*, Pahlavī *dākh*, Saṁskṛt *drākshā*, English *grape*, all mean one and the same fruit, and very sweet fruit."*

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* This rendering of the parable is taken from the late Dr. Bhagavan Das's book, "The Essential Unity of All Religions".

"Truth is one, but sages call it by various names." We all know this and yet most of us cling to the name, make claims on its behalf and reject those of our fellow men who will not accept those claims ! This is not religion, but irreligion.

If true religion is that which unites, then the reverse is equally true: Where there are disunion, strife and opposition, intolerance and unbrotherliness in the name of religion, we face the ugly and evil forces of irreligion.

Let us live up to the ancient concept of Religion:

That which supports, that which holds together the peoples everywhere, that is Dharma—Religion.—*Mahābhārata*

Religious maturity makes for tolerance, for understanding, for acceptance of other religions. Only the immature evince bigotry and intolerance. As the human mind becomes enlightened it perceives more and more the essential unity of all religions, for it can probe behind the form, go within the surface and, discarding the husk, grasp the nourishing core. Since every man is potentially divine, every man has within him the latent gift of learning Truth.

The unifying spirit of true Religion is that Eternal Truth, that Supreme Divine Presence, that One light, of which we are all the children.

Permit me to dwell on that symbol of light, and first let me quote a relevant extract from an article by H. P. Blavatsky, for it enshrines the message I wish to leave with you all:

"There is but ONE Eternal Truth, one universal, infinite and changeless Spirit of Love, Truth and Wisdom, impersonal, therefore bearing a different name with every nation, one Light for all, in which the whole Humanity lives and moves and has its being. Like the spectrum in optics, giving multicoloured and various rays, which are yet caused by one and the same sun, so theologies and sacerdotal systems are many. But the Universal religion

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* This rendering of the parable is taken from the late Dr. Bhagavan Das's book, "The Essential Unity of All Religions".

can only be one, if we accept the real, primitive meaning of the root of that word. We, Theosophists, so accept it; and therefore say, 'We are all brothers—by the laws of Nature, of birth and death, as also by the laws of our utter helplessness from birth to death in this world of sorrow and deceptive illusions. Let us, then, love, help, and mutually defend each other against this spirit of deception; and while holding to that which each of us accepts as his ideal of truth and reality—i.e. to the religion which suits each of us best—let us unite ourselves to form a practical nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE, CREED, OR COLOUR." (*Lucifer*, April 1888).

Indeed, there is but One light for all ! Let us claim our divine inheritance; Let us know ourselves as children of that One light of Spirit, and walk as Its children. That One light is "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is the same light referred to by Shri Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Chapter XIII, verse 17:

"It is the light of all lights, and is declared to be beyond all darkness; it is wisdom, and that which is to be obtained by wisdom; in the hearts of all it ever presideth."

That last sentence yields a most significant clue. Religion as a way of life, as a discipline, must include introspection. The turning within, the going inwards, in an endeavour to sense the presence of the light Divine in one's own heart and consciousness. So many seek God outside whereas God must be found within the chamber, or the cave of the heart. When that Sovereign Lord is found we realize the oneness of humanity.

As Swami Vivekananda said:

"The Lord of one religion is the lord of all religions.
And that lord is the Self of all creatures."

Thus an unbiased study of comparative religions leads to "a deeper realization of the Self and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood."

Let us endeavour to be men of Religion, that is, brothers to all men. "I see that sensible men and conscientious men all over the world were of one religion," wrote Emerson. That one religion transcends all sects and "isms". It is essentially universal and, uniting all men, will enable us to meet the challenge of today. The need for answering this challenge of our time was forcefully brought out yesterday by Professor John Nosco in his address on Christianity and Hinduism. He invited us to become progressive. I should like to interpret that word "progressive" as meaning progress towards the light of Truth, progress towards the realization of the Brotherhood of man. Let us cease being childish and making exclusive claims. If we think ours is the only religion, or even the highest one, we are but sowing the seeds of disunion and frustrating the very purpose of Religion.

Indeed, the present cycle is one of transition, one of rapid and revolutionary changes in all fields. Let us meet it "with the message of love, peace and brotherhood." That is the central teaching of all religions. In closing let me quote extracts from scriptures of different religious traditions all embodying the Golden Rule:

Buddhism: Hurt not others with that which pains yourself. —*Udanavarga*, 5.18

Christianity: All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.—Bible, *St. Matthew* 7: 12.

Confucianism: Is there any one maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout one's whole life? Surely the maxim of loving-kindness is such. Do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you.—*Analects*, 15.23.

Hebraism: What is hurtful to yourself do not to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary. Go learn it.—*Talmud.*

Hinduism: This is the sum of duty; do naught to others which if done to thee, would cause thee pain.—*Mahābhārata*, 5.15, 17.

Islam: No one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.—*Traditions.*

Jainism: In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self and should therefore refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us if inflicted upon ourselves.—*Yogaśāstra*, 2.20.

Sikhism: As thou deemest thyself so deem others. Then shalt thou become a partner in heaven.

Taoism: Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain: and regard your neighbour's loss as your own loss.—*T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien.*

Zoroastrianism: That nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self.—*Dadistan-i-dinik*, 94:5.

PHILOSOPHY AS A SPIRITUAL QUEST

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If there is a single word in Sanskrit that admirably sums up the spirit of Indian philosophy, it is the word "*jijñāsā*". In plain English *jijñāsā* means desire to know. But a desire, unless it be an idle one, issues forth in action. A desire to know, if genuine, undoubtedly stimulates an enquiry which should culminate in knowledge. Thus by a slight extension of meaning the word "*jijñāsā*" comes to signify "*vichāra*", i.e. a rational enquiry which results in knowledge.[1] From this point of view it may be said that the philosophy of Vedānta, as might be apparent from the first aphorism of the Vedānta-Sūtra, is a rational enquiry regarding the nature of the Brahman. The Mīmāṁsā system, likewise, is a rational enquiry about the nature and function of dharma, and the Sāṁkhya philosophy, an enquiry about the means of extirpating pain. Even where the word *jijñāsā* or any of its equivalents does not explicitly occur the spirit of persistent enquiry does not fail to make itself felt. Initially the enquiry may start from a problem of life and experience like that of pain and suffering, or from a felt need to understand the real meaning of religious texts like the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. But whatever the starting point might be, philosophy, as the sages in India understood it, is a persistent questioning, a "conversation of the soul with itself" with a view to attaining knowledge.

In India philosophy is ordinarily called *darśana*. The name itself is pretty old. Primarily it means visual perception. More usually, however, it signifies any kind of immediate knowledge, visual or otherwise. In this sense, intuition of the self, or a mystic vision of God may also be called *darśana*. As a matter of fact, philosophers have extensively used the word *darśana* to indicate a direct vision of the Truth.

Etymologically *darśana* also means an organ or instrument of perception and by long usage it has come to stand for those branches of knowledge that are instrumental in the realisation of truth. Philosophy being a rational enquiry is expected to give us that insight into the nature of truth which is so necessary for its realisation. The role of philosophy as a means to truth-realisation becomes clear when we analyse the meaning of such texts of the Upaniṣads as "Realise the self, hear about it, reason about it, meditate on it."[2] The self which is the same as the Brahman, the supreme Being, is to be realised or intuited. As a first step towards such realisation one has to approach an experienced preceptor and study the scripture with him. This is what is meant by 'hearing.' But exposition of the texts even by a competent teacher may not always produce conviction. One may still be inclined to doubt whether the exposition is correct or the doctrine so expounded is true. Hearing should, therefore, be followed by thorough reasoning which alone can dispel doubt and fortify faith. Such reflective thinking or '*manana*,' as it is called, being an essential step to self-realisation, is also a mode of *darśana* in the instrumental sense. This function of '*manana*' or reasoning is well brought out by a verse of the Smṛiti (religious law) which states: "first hear from the scripture, then judge (the truth) by means of arguments; after that, constantly meditate; these indeed are the means of realisation."[3] The idea is, that reasoning clears the ground, secures faith and thereby makes steady meditation possible. It is by meditation that a truth mediately known is turned into an object of intuition. But reasoned reflection is an essential pre-requisite of meditation. The importance of reasoning is admitted by nearly all the great thinkers in India. In a passage of his commentary on the Brahmasūtra, Rāmānuja, the founder of the Viśiṣṭādvaita school of Vedānta philosophy, says "it is only when a statement is favoured by proper reasoning that it can yield an unwavering knowledge of truth"[4].

Now, philosophy as a rational enquiry presupposes doubt. Where there is no doubt to trouble the mind there is no problem to be solved. That which is utterly unknown and that which is palpably known raise no problem. It is only when an object is superficially known while its real nature is involved in doubt that it poses a problem and prompts an enquiry[5]. The progress of science or of philosophy, then, is not from the unknown to the known, but from what is partially and imperfectly known to the same object as more fully and perfectly known. The starting point, as already indicated, may be a fact of common experience uncritically accepted as true or a religious doctrine accepted in faith. The task of reflection in either case is to critically examine the datum and render it intelligible and harmonious with the rest of our knowledge. A constructive and methodical doubt is, therefore, necessary for philosophy and so the Nyāya school has given it an important place in the list of categories, i.e. the topics of philosophical discussion. According to *Gotama*, certain and positive knowledge is to be attained by an examination of the rival views that emerge as a result of doubting.[6] At every stage of a philosophical discourse it is doubt that sets the problem and challenges reason to discover the truth. Vātsyāyana goes so far as to describe doubt as the distinctive topic of the Nyāya as a system of philosophy. Without "doubt" and other allied categories the Nyāya philosophy would be hardly distinguishable from a system of religious knowledge like the Upaniṣads.[7] Like the latter, the Nyāya too is interested in the liberation (*mokṣa*) of the self from its worldly bondage. But whereas a religious book accepts the existence of the self, its bondage and the possibility of its liberation as a matter of faith, philosophy undertakes to examine the grounds on which the faith rests. Since, however, such examination presupposes doubt, an analysis of the nature and function of doubt is a genuinely philosophical business.

If the Nyāya school treats doubt as one of the most fundamental topics (*padārtha*) of its system, Mīmāṁsā and other schools do not fail to recognise it as an indispensable element of philosophical discourse. In the Mīmāṁsā as well as in the Vedānta, each section (*adhikaraṇa*) dealing with a particular topic involves the five following elements: the subject matter (*viṣaya*); doubt (*saṁśaya*); the opponents' view (*pūrvapakṣa*); the accepted view (*uttara*); and utility (*prayojana*).[8] Philosophical discussion starts with a statement of the subject matter to be discussed. Then, doubt is pressed into service, and a view opposed to the correct one is suggested for examination. It is the view that the opponent might uphold. In every philosophical discourse there is an attempt to do full justice to this view. All possible arguments that might be offered in its support are stated and then disposed of by counter-arguments. The idea is that if the rival view is thus thoroughly examined and refuted, the accepted conclusion will shine forth as the only reasonable truth about the matter in question. Sometimes a philosopher is required to dispose of, in this way, quite a number of rival views instead of one.

Searching examination which is the very nerve of philosophy is aptly denoted by the word '*parīkṣā*' and is recognised to be the most important step in the method of philosophical enquiry. A philosopher, accordingly, is often called a '*parīkṣaka*'—an examiner of truth. Before examination every thesis is taken to be a matter under dispute, and almost as in a court of law the dispute is sought to be resolved on the basis of evidence rendered on both sides of the issue. This method of solving a problem by means of arguments and counter-arguments, that is, by dialectic, has been technically called *Vāda*. "*Vāda* is a debate in which two or more speakers participate with a view to discerning the truth."[9] This is the age-old method of philosophical enquiry in India. Its origin may be traced back to the Vedas. In a way it is similar to the method employed by Plato in his Dialogues. But, perhaps, it is superior to the latter in its logical rigour and exact procedure. Sometimes we find it cast in the form of a dialogue, say, between a teacher and his disciple. But more often, and particularly in strictly philosophical literature, it assumes the form of a monologue in which all questions, objections and their replies originate equally from the author's mind. A determined effort to doubt and enquire has thus saved philosophy in India from lapsing into dogmatism. It is, of course, true that sometimes philosophy appears as a resolute attempt to defend and justify a particular faith. In the Mīmāṁsā and the Vedānta, for example, some Vedic doctrines have been sought to be rationalised, and this has induced some scholars to condemn the whole of Indian philosophy as dogmatic. But one should not be blind to the fact that neither the one nor the other is in favour of an uncritical acceptance of the Vedas. The question of the validity of the Vedas has engaged the anxious attention of all schools of thinkers and the question of the validity of knowledge whether natural or revealed has developed into a philosophical theme of absorbing interest. When Śaṅkara and his followers reject the claim of reason alone as the final court of appeal in any enquiry about truth, they do not reject it without reason. A thesis proved by very subtle reasoning, they say, may yet be disproved by another reasoning subtler than itself.[10] But they have never questioned the right of reason to be our guide in understanding the Vedas and harmonising their teaching with the rest of our knowledge. Furthermore, the Mīmāṁsā and the Vedānta are not the whole of Indian philosophy. There are systems of philosophy, whether allied to the Vedas or opposed to them, which start from an independent basis in common experience and exhibit greater confidence in the powers of reason. Even the sources of knowledge, *pramāṇas* as they are called, are not left out of the scope of criticism. It is reason that defines the distinctive nature of each *pramāṇa* and prescribes the norms and conditions of its application.

What, now it may be asked, is the goal of all this enquiry ? If philosophy is a persistent questioning, what is it meant for ? Speaking for nearly all the schools of Indian philosophy (and much of Western philosophy as well), salvation of the soul may be said to be the avowed end. For, excepting the Cārvāka materialists, and perhaps some schools of Buddhism, all other schools believe that the self is eternal and imperishable and that its worldly life is a state of involution in pain and suffering, which, in the language of philosophy, is called its bondage. To end this life of suffering for good is the universal longing of all creatures. This is the "*parama puruṣārtha*", the highest value that one should strive to attain. The problem of bondage and liberation of the soul is the central problem in all philosophies, and the world, nay, even God have been subordinated to the needs of the soul. A beginningless ignorance has been pursuing the soul like a shadow causing a vicious circle of attachment, action, worldly life and consequent suffering. One has to end the suffering by attacking it at its very root, that is, by destroying the ignorance which is the root cause of this chain of evils. The light of knowledge alone can finally dispel this darkness of ignorance. This explains why the sages of India so passionately prayed for light. In their eyes, darkness is death while the illumination that knowledge brings holds out the promise of an everlasting life.

Philosophy, thus understood, is no trivial pursuit of knowledge, no idle fancy of the human mind. It is a spiritual quest of the highest importance and "touches the very depth of our being".[11] Here in India, no one who believes in God but disowns the eternal soul will be honoured as a theist. Faith in the soul's immortality and its boundless dimensions is the true measure of theism. Confidence in the powers of the self is the very foundation of religious and spiritual life. Of all the lessons taught by our ancient sages this perhaps was nearest to the heart of Swāmī Vivekānanda, and this is the truth he wanted most passionately to inculcate.

Within the limits of this paper it is not possible to deal with the different theories of the self propounded by our ancient philosophers. While all the theistic schools emphatically assert that the soul or self is unbounded in space and time, they do not fully agree about its precise nature or number. The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools hold that knowledge or consciousness is no essential attribute of the self, so that, the liberated soul is entirely devoid of it. According to the Mīmāṁsakas, however, consciousness is an intrinsic quality of the soul and in liberation it is intensified into an eternal state of happiness. The Sāṁkhya goes a step further and identifies the soul with consciousness, so that consciousness is no longer an attribute, but the very substance of the soul. All the above schools subscribe to the doctrine of plurality of selves. The position of the Vedānta is rather difficult to define, for, there are many shades of opinion varying from absolute monism to an unqualified pluralism. The Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, which may be described as the crown of all philosophical speculations in India, boldly identifies the soul with the supreme Being, the Brahman, and denies the reality of this world made up of difference and diversity. A close examination of all these and other opinions will reveal that from the practical point of view their differences are of minor consequence. There is a unity of purpose which triumphs over all their diversities, reducing the very differences into opportunities for spiritual aspirants at various stages of intellectual development. Vijñānabhikṣu, an eminent philosopher of the middle ages, goes so far as to arrange the theistic schools in an hierarchical order, of which the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is the base and the Vedānta the apex. The Nyāya which proves the reality of the self as an eternal substance distinct from the body and sense organs, is at first necessary as an effective antidote to Cārvāka materialism. The Sāṁkhya then lifts the seeker of truth to a higher plane by identifying the self with pure consciousness. The Vedānta completes the process by disclosing the essential identity of the self and God.[12] From the spiritual point of view the different systems may thus be taken as representing differences of standpoint which are but necessary moments in the path of progress, and ultimately philosophy turns out to be an essential part of spiritual discipline. That philosophising is as much a religious act as worship and meditation are, has been most eloquently expressed by Udayana in a beautiful verse of his *Nyāyakusumāñjali* (literally, offering of a handful of Nyāya flowers). Says he, "This logical discourse, which is known as *manana* (reasoning), is essentially a service to God, a duty which comes after the act of *śravaṇa* (hearing)".[13] This indeed is the spirit in which philosophy used to be practised in India.

References :

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2. *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyaḥ.*
3. *śrotavyaḥ śrutivākyebhayḥ mantavyascopapattibhiḥ matvā ca satataṁ dheyaḥ ete darśanahetavaḥ.*
4. *nyāyānugṛhītasya vākyasyārtha niścāyakatvāt*
5. *tatra nānupalabdhe nānirṇīte'rthe nyāyaḥ pravartate*—Vātsyāyana's commentary on *Nyāyasūtra.*
6. *vimṛśya pakṣa-pratipakṣābhyām arthāvadhāraṇam nirṇayaḥ.*
7. *teṣām pṛthagvacanamantarenādhyātma-vidyāmātramiyam syāt yathopaniṣadāh.*
8. Vide—Bhattacintāmaṇi—Chow Edn. p. 5.
9. *tattvabubhutsoḥkathā vādah*—Tarkābhāṣa by Kesava Misra.
10. *yatnenanumitopyarthaḥ kuśalairanumātṛbhiḥ abhiyuktatarairanyairanyathaivopapadyate.*
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11. Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy—Vol. I, p. 2.
12. *Sāṁkhya Pravacana Bhāṣya*—Introduction.
13. *Nyāyacarceyamīśasya manana-vyapadesabhāk*
    Upāsanaiva kriyate śravaṇānantarāgatā.
    N. K. Bk. I—verse 3.

CHRISTIANITY TODAY

MIROSLAV NOVAK, PH.D., B.D.
Patriarch of the Czechoslovak Church

Dear friends, brethren !

Allow me first to convey to you, gathered here at this Parliament of Religions (of so many creeds and religions) the cordial greetings from the Christian Churches in Czechoslovakia which are united in the Ecumenical Council on behalf of which I have been here. Allow me also to express the pleasure of being here in your midst. This Parliament of Religions which is the solemn end of the whole year of Swami Vivekananda's Centenary, is a historic event. Representatives of all the great religions are sitting together, tolerant and cooperative, in a brotherly fellowship. We all know what sufferings have been caused to mankind by religious fanaticism. We are here, listening to each other, discovering each other, and all, together, looking for the will of God to help us save mankind out of crisis of the modern civilisation.

I am not coming to you as a scholar with a theory of Christianity and I do not want to say at any rate something brand new about it. I would like to value the Christian faith from within a church as a believer and minister of religion, from the daily life of a community of faith, love and hope. It is not easy to plead before you for Christianity, and I want to be sincere. Swami Vivekananda as a young man attended the First Parliament of Religions seventy years ago in 1893 in Chicago. There, Christians holding Christianity as the only universal and true religion, tried to evangelize the Asiatic religions. The representatives of those religions met together and formulated a reply: "We do not deny the worth of the Christian faith but...we see that your life is a complete contradiction to what you preach, that you are not led by the spirit of love but by the spirit of self-seeking and brute force..." Unfortunately, I cannot say that this was true only in the past. As I was asked to speak here about Christianity I got the letter from the General Secretary, Swami Sambuddhananda, only in December, at a time when I was quite unhappy seeing what has been done with the feast of Christ's Nativity in our so-called "Christian" Western world. It was simply an enormous waste of everything that might have been more profitable, an inflation of gift-giving and exchange of millions of impersonal (should I say official) greetings. It was certainly such a misuse of Christianity ! I for one would not eulogise it.

Thirtyfive years ago I studied at the Philips University in Marburg/Lahn (Germany) where I participated in a study group about the book of an

American missionary, Stanley Jones: The Christ of the Indian Standard. In a marginal note in the book I wrote: First of all the relation of different races must be solved and only then it will be possible to win men and women for Christ and not for Christianity. I had made a subtle distinction between Christ and Christianity, for, I had an inner struggle. I felt the weakness of the organized Christianity. From my Indian friend Manilal Patel I had to swallow hard words against the ways of Christianity in respect of war. Prof. Geering from Holland published his book "The Fall of Christianity", in the Foreword of which we read:

'One of the most poignant tragedies of the dark year 1914 was the powerlessness of organized Christianity to prevent the Great War and a tragedy even more grievous was the impotence of the Churches to shorten the war or to influence its course in the slightest degree. That this failure to indicate a Christian solution to the problems of the international relations gravely damaged the prestige of organized Christianity, is beyond doubt.' However, it was not a failure of Jesus Christ. It is our failure that we Christians, bearing his name, are not pursuing his teachings in our lives. Through him the Kingdom of God came into this world and *is among us* (Luke 17: 20-21).

He is the Way, he is the Truth, he is the Life. Through him the world is a New Creation. Christian faith means personal experience of direct encounter with God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Such a faith is a great strength in our daily life. And even if we are in 1964, fifty years after the First Great War and twentyfive years after the start of the Second Great War, and though like the sword of Damocles, the devastating atomic war hangs over our heads, we are not losing faith and hope. Through the past failures Christianity is learning what God demands from us. And, especially in the last decade of years, we can see how the churches are overcoming their separation, how they are finding their special mission in the midst of the world. The old quarrels among the churches have come to an end. Over two hundred churches are united in the great family of the World Council of Churches which held its Third General Assembly in India at New Delhi two years ago and received the esteem of Orthodox Churches. One could follow the two sessions of the Seccond Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church showing, after centuries of enmity, a sign of readiness for a dialogue with other Christian Churches, especially, with the Eastern Orthodox Churches (for the first time after the schism of 1054 when all communications stopped with a reciprocal anathema of the Roman Pope and the Eastern Patriarch). There are and there will be differences among the Churches. I myself, for example, belong to the Czechoslovak Church which was founded after the First Great War on January 8th 1920. The Roman Catholic priests who founded the Church wanted to fulfil the desire, emerging ever anew in the hearts of believers, to achieve Christian earnestness in faith and in life. This desire which has been apparent in our country since the days of the Byzantine Mission of Cyrill and Methodius whose work, 1100 years ago (863 A.D.), made Christianity take roots with us. In the Hussite and Brethren movement this desire meant—at first in the personal example of Master John Huss—to seek full harmony of daily life with the truth revealed in Jesus Christ. The secret seed of true believers remained even during the three hundred years of foreign occupation after the victory of counter-reformation in 1620. The circumstance in which the Czechoslovak Church was formed by the Catholic priests and laymen was influenced by the efforts of Catholic modernism and by the heritage of the Bohemian Reformation, particularly of John Huss.

By its liturgical principle the Czechoslovak Church follows the Catholic tradition, both eastern and western, while in its theology it follows the common line of the Reformation Churches. A heritage of Catholic modernism can be seen in the principle of one undivided truth; this principle involves an open-minded recognition of scientific knowledge and an incessant effort to keep contact with the problems and aims of secular cultural achievements and with social and political life. This is why the Czechoslovak Church as a whole intensely takes part in the work of the Christian Peace Conference, started by the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Church professes the faith in the one Church of Christ all the world over. This church is divided into various church organizations and denominations. No single one of these particular churches can be in itself a true Church of Christ unless it recognizes itself to be merely a portion of the universal Church of Christ. This ecumenical ecclesiology has led the Czechoslovak Church to join the World Council of Churches. To our understanding, the fulness of life in Christ is possible only in ecumenical fellowship and communion of all particular churches.

In this we are moving with other churches towards each other. And the new generation is more ecumenically minded. I recall the article 'homo ecumenicus' in the Ecumenical Review of January 1963. A 'homo ecumenicus' ... "must meet the basic requisites of personal faith in God, knowledge of the Gospel, moral integrity, and love for his neighbours." And I should add that he must also know and esteem the teachings and efforts of other religions and also of social movements without religious basis. God has called us to affirm the unity of the human race. Therefore, we are here and we are looking up to the great love for man as manifested in the life and work of the Indian Saint Swami Vivekananda. There is no other way that would unite us all. Love must be the basis and the means not only of believers of different religions, but also of the statesmen and the politicians. There is our hope for the future of mankind.

We in the Christian Churches want to set a good example. We are uniting in the work for the preservation of peace. In Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, the Second All Christian Peace Assembly will take place from June 28th to July 3rd, 1964. The main theme will be: "My covenant is life and peace" (Malachi 2:5) and we invite you, brethren, to unite with us.

To live today means to live together !

UNIVERSAL RELIGION—ITS CONCEPT AND REALISATION

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Religion is essentially a relation, but this relationship is formed not with a sensible object by the aid of the senses nor even by the intellect as realised in the domain of empirical consciousness. It is a basically spiritual relationship which rouses in us the highest form of love, devotion, holiness and steady light of wisdom to be related with or projected upon certain object which also is not limited and finite, mundane and temporal, but a universal and abiding spiritual reality.

Religion, with its stress upon union or communion with the Divine or the ultimate Reality, points the way to the highest philosophical position and teaches us that it is not by abstraction from or as Alexander puts it, by 'intellect alone', we can come nearer to our goal or 'clasp the Truth of the central core and hold fast that centre's central sense: An Atom there shall fill thee more than realms on Truth's circumstance'. Truth is grasped by the complete man. To know it we must live in it. It must become a part of our total being. Religion true to its claim should be the relation of the whole man to the eternal and fundamental reality. Spiritual consciousness elevates us from narrow ego-frontier to the broad land of spirit, the positive realisation of fundamental unity, the *Advaitam* on which the whole superstructure of religious life rests.

This spirituality is not a temporary feeling, which the poet and the artist sometimes have, or the lover and the philanthropist sometimes enjoy, or in a calm moment in the midst of tremendous activities the activist finds himself face to face with. It is an abiding settlement, a permanent possession, a filling to overflow when the personality's emptying is complete. To the theist it comes after an existentialist's moment, after a crisis, when life almost ceases to be. To the rationalist, it is serene revelation at the end of ultimate analysis, the penultimate stage being equally critical, when things and beings, all objects, appear as reflections in the mirror of the lady of Shallott, cracking from side to side and falling and breaking to pieces when a soundless void engulfs the experience which later rises up, transfigured as the universal. Whether a theist or a rationalist, the shifting of the centre of gravity from the individual to the universal is a perilous but joyous spiritual adventure.

Both spiritual and rational life are universal. Spiritual life is universal because spiritual, though appears to be many, has the same nature. Rational life is universal because reason has the same objective reference. The Upanisads say that he who knows the Brahman becomes the Brahman (*brahmabid* is *brahmabhu*). This can be true only when 'to know implies to transform one's being' and this again can be true only upon the object to be known as one's innermost self. Here knowledge means spiritual transformation of being.

Spiritual transformation or manifestation of the divine potentiality in human personality is the essence of religion.

'True religion is entirely transcendental. Every being that is in the universe has the potentiality of transcending the senses; he will even one day transcend the senses and reach God.'

(SWAMI VIVEKANANDA)

When spiritual consciousness, which is the mind in its integrity, is at work, man becomes possessed with deathless longing for all that is great and divine. Man has the immediate intuition of his unity with the eternal, though, in the derived intellectual consciousness, he remains apart and separated. Eckhart says: 'The soul's perfection consists in liberation from the life that is divided into the life that is limited. The moment one transcends his apparent phenomenal self bound to senses and intellect and identifies himself with the universal ground within he is delivered from all mental modification and illusory becoming. He touches infinitude, lays hold on the eternal order and shares his kinship with the divine'.

Swami Vivekananda just like his great master Sri Ramakrishna by dint of his own intense spiritual experience seized the central core of being by boldly throwing out junks of mass beliefs and superstitions, but carefully retaining every grain of truth. Sri Ramakrishna did not attempt to build up a unified structure of a universal religion by putting together essential elements from all the different religions. He, on the contrary, held that the truth of each religion lies not in a certain philosophy, but in a certain mode of experiencing the one reality.

Dying Religion and the New one

The professed religions irrespective of time and clime are mostly degenerated into sectarian groups fostering rivalry, inner barriers that divide, and antagonise man. To the Hindus, the Buddhists are atheists, to the Muslims, the Hindus are heretics. The so-called religious sects far from spreading love and holiness are out to create so many narrow walls around them and mutual hate among innocent camp followers. Every religion or church claims that God has entrusted his exclusive revelation to his own prophet, Buddha, Krishna, Christ or Mohammad with the expectation that all others are to follow blindly his steps or suffer spiritual privation or be damned to hell. Religion stills doubt, suppresses criticism. Those Prometheuses who dared to steal knowledge by the process of self-enquiry or scientific discoveries were enchained in the rock, or a Socrates forced to take poison to end his life or the other thrown into consuming fire to hush his rebel voice. It has encouraged more negation of life than intense living, world fleeing, escapism than world seeking and loving it as well. Religion with its 'Thou shalt renounce' is the direct opposite of the new commandment, 'Thou shalt enjoy' on which all our major and minor prophets are agreed. Religion, or rather the established church in every country, is a branch of statecraft and is becoming a handle of reaction of political parties. The present social crisis, whether in war or peace, clearly demonstrates the feeble claims of religion to guide destiny of wornout men and women amidst gloom and despair as compared with the demands of political, social, revolutionary ideals.

"This may well be called the age of criticism," said Kant, "a criticism from which nothing need hope to escape." When religion seeks to shelter itself behind its sanctity, and law behind its majesty, they justly awaken suspicion against themselves and lose all claim to the sincere respect which reason yields only to that which has been able to bear the test of its free and open scrutiny. This critical enquiry has no doubt liberated our minds from dogmatic slumber, narrow frame of creeds and sects, from the fear of popes and priests. But we are not yet free as we have demolished one set of gods and replaced it by new idols. Powerful bureaucrats, dictators, military generals, heads of states, leaders of a monstrous economic system, capitalism, or a political party command our dull obedience and blind loyalty. Fear reigns supreme. We have denounced the ideals of renunciation and sacrifice as self-torture or denial of life, or irrational phobia nurtured in dark middle ages.

We are out for external conquests, 'Continual craving for creature comforts and love of luxury, unbridled and endless covetousness in public life, dictatorship of blood and brutality, anxious to make the world a shambles dripping with human blood. Our common life is dominated by one urge to seek food and shelter and perpetuation of the race. But we cannot always remain content within the walls that ensure our only physical existence. We feel in us a spiritual void and a restlessness and try to find meaning of life or values beyond the barriers of our physical existence. And so even then we are often willing to accept death as the termination of this physical life for the sake of the true, the good and the beautiful. This fact expresses man's deeper urge for freedom, for liberation of itself in the realm of the limitless where he realises his relationship with the truth which relates him to the universe in a disinterested spirit of love.'

(RABINDRANATH)

The poet rightly visualized that the distinctive feature of measuralism is the same thing as the finiteness of its boundaries. To increase one's own bounds engineered by love of power or supremacy in every sphere of life one has necessarily to encroach upon those of others. It would be inevitably followed by intrusion upon other's territory resulting in war and violence, forceful conversion of one's faith or ideological indoctrination.

'Of all fetters those that falsely assume spiritual designations are the most difficult to break, and of all dungeons the most terrible are those invisible ones where men's souls are imprisoned in self-delusion bred by vanity. The self-magnification, with its consequent thwarting of the best in man, that goes on unashamed when religion deadens into sectarianism is a perverse form of worldliness under the mask of religion. But over and through it all there is spread a mysterious spirit of harmony, constantly modulating rebellious elements into creative unity, evolving ineffable peace and beauty out of the incoherently battling combatants perpetually struggling to elbow out their neighbours into a turmoil of dissolution. And this great harmony, this everlasting Yea—this is truth that bridges the dark abysms of time and space, reconciles contradictions, imparts perfect balance to the unstable. This all-pervading mystery is what we call spiritual in its essence.'

(RABINDRANATH TAGORE:
An address given at the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Parliament of Religions, 1936)

Spiritualism is the core of religion. An artist tastes spiritual delight in aesthetic experience. A *sadhak* or a mystic realises spiritual freedom in his flight from alone to alone. A musician feels the throb of the spiritual fervour in sonorous vibration *A karmayogi* partakes of similar spiritual journey by his disinterested devoted service. None is less spiritual than others. The essence of religion lies in emphasising the spiritual aspect to elevate the soul and transform life preparing it to divine perfection.

All religions possess both truth and certain amount of error. Historically organised religion in many places has 'crippled the free flight of intelligence and stifled glad devotion to human values. It has fostered superstition and prescribed crime, it has comforted millions of suffering humanity with illusion of extra terrestrial solace to compensate for the barrenness of their earthly lives. Religion is only a species of poetry (Santayana), mythology (Croce), sociological phenomenon (Durkheim) or a narcotic for a decadent society (Lenin). Spiritual life is a deception and dream.'

(S. RADHAKRISHNAN:
The Spirit in Man, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, 481)

In primitive society we find lack of understanding between man and nature as the source of the fear or helplessness which ultimately gave rise to religion. To dissipate fear the primitive men created an imaginary world of totems and spirits, of magic and propitiation. Even today popular religion is associated with magic cures and supernatural apparitions, priestly frauds and mass of superstitions.

Those so-called religious men play with idols, fearful and greedy; hence they ossify and stagnate in the lotus land of formal devotion (R. Rolland). We cannot shut us away from true knowledge and right vision of the mysteries of the world and human nature. It is better to suffer anguish of moral conflict or clash of ideas than remain content in foolish complacency. Moral codes and religious creeds become mostly sterile when they are not tested by fire of rational enquiry and critical intellect. Dogmatism kills the soul, it exalts orthodoxy and tradition over spiritual experience. Let us not bow down our head to any stupefying power, supernatural force, or authority based on physical strength and power, nor follow any moral code or religious creed that defies our conscience, and understanding or the spirit of free enquiry. If there is a spirit at the centre of things let us be more loyal to our inner spirit than to external conformity. The source of moral sense and human values is rooted in the depth of the soul.

The more we know us in the process of self-realisation the more we become *svarāts*, sovereign over ourselves. We grow spontaneously without following a routine conformity or fixed code handed from past. Man is subject, a law-giver possessing freedom of self-determination. We can work ourselves up to the high peak of enlightenment. 'Spiritual absolutism is responsible for the judicial murders of some divinest figures of antiquity. It exalts orthodoxy above holiness of life. The history of religion is the record of the conflict of contradictory systems each of them claiming absolute truth.....If comparative religion tells us anything it is that every religion is moulded by fallible and imperfect human instruments and so long as it is alive it will be changing spirit in growth and even while we are observing one side of its life the wheel is turning and the shadow of the past is twining itself into it.'

(S. RADHAKRISHNAN:
An Idealist View of Life)

We are not enchained in a dumb inert mechanised world. Only the dead are completely changeless. And the power of change is essential both for conservation and progress. No tradition nor goal is final and absolute. Freedom is the secret of progress both in spiritual and material life. Temples or churches, books or forms, says a spiritually inspired soul equipped with rare insight and dynamism, Swami Vivekananda, are just for the child's play so as to make the spiritual man strong enough to take yet higher steps and these first steps are necessary to be taken if he wants religion. In the low land of slavish fear and dogmatic slumber and dull obediency to tradition men become more prone to sectarianism. The arrogant spirit of sectarianism which so often uses either active or passive, violent or subtle, methods of persecution on the least provocation or without any, has to be reminded of the fact that poetry is not a mere idea—It is expression. The self-expression of God is in the variedness of creation; and our attitude towards the infinite must in its expression also have a variedness of individuality, ceaseless and unending.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The free currents of Divine or Spiritual life sustain at bottom these apparent centres of independent being and existence.

Universal religion as acclaimed by Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda-Rabindranath was never a dead conformity or dry dogma formed by vain intellect, or a mere product of liberal thought. It recognised and paid full significance to the emotional and aesthetic resources of man and diverted or sublimated them towards the *Para* or the Highest.

Swami Vivekananda believed that in spiritualism lies India's real greatness. This spirituality does not mean the changing manners and customs but the idea of oneness of all the infinite, the idea of the impersonal, the wonderful idea of the eternal soul of man, of the unbroken continuity in the march of beings and the infinity of the universe.

The more we rise in the scale of spiritual realisation the more conflicting forms or apparent diversities tend to disappear. All paths of ascent lead to the hill top. It is immaterial what approach we take. 'As the birds fly in the air, as the fish swim in the sea leaving no trace behind even so is the pathway traversed by the seeker of spirit."

(S. RADHAKRISHNAN:
Religion and the World Crisis)

The seekers of truth, free pilgrims in the land of spirit do not form a new sect or code, but it is we the fanatic followers, so-called believers having timid and shrunken imagination who fail to dive deep into messages delivered by the seers or reconcile apparent anomalies instead but create so many dungeons of sects and dogmas never dreamt of nor anticipated by those who originally received them. Paths are many, we are to choose one by virtue of our discrimination and understanding and reach the hill top. By *Karma*, *Jnana*, *Bhakti*, *Yoga*, by one or more or all of these the vision of Paramatman is obtained.

The universal religion

Life is not monochord. Variation is essential for its growth; similarly, variety of faiths has enriched the spiritual world and made it comprehensible to all types of men. Since we are various in our natures, the same method can scarcely be applied to any two of us in the same manner. Some, you will find, are very emotional in their nature, some very philosophically rational, others cling to all sorts of ritualistic forms, want things which are concrete. And all of these certainly cannot have the same method. If there were only one method to arrive at truth it would be death for everyone else who is not similarly constituted. Again, you cannot make all conform to the same ideal. That is a fact, and thank God that is so—it is the clash of thought, the differentiation of thought that awakens thought. Now, if we all thought alike we would be like Egyptian mummies in a museum looking vacantly at one another's face—no more than that. The necessity of variation both Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda emphasised, but at the same time they warned that it should not be narrowed down to mutual exclusiveness. The religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic, they are but various phases of the Eternal Religion. That one Eternal Religion is applied to different planes of existence and is applied to the opinions of various minds and various races. In the height of existence all discordant notes dissolve, we discover the underlying unity in diversity within the vast ocean of all religious thoughts and all rivers past and present, Western and Eastern.

Said Sri Ramakrishna: Do not argue about doctrine or religion. There is only one. All rivers flow to the Ocean. Flow and let others flow too. The great stream carves for itself, according to the slope of its journey, according to race, time and temperament—its own distinct bed. But it is all the same water. Go, flow on towards the Ocean.

Sri Ramakrishna's or Swami Vivekananda's endeavour as pointed out earlier was not to construct an edifice of a universal religion by putting together precious gems or essential elements from all the different religions. They rather emphasised that truth is not confined to any particular faith nor the truth of each religion lies in a certain philosophy, but in a certain mode of experiencing the One Reality.

INDIC HERITAGE IN ABRAHAMIC FAITHS—JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

PROF. ABRAHAM N. POLIAK

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters !

Two thousand years ago the Abrahamic spiritual tradition was already regarded as connected with the Indic world of thought. Indeed, it was considered as representing India in the Mediterranean area. The famous Jewish Mellenist historian Josephus attributes to Aristotle the view that the Jews descended from Indian philosophers (Against Apion 1:22). Josephus himself describes the world civilization as having expanded from India and its surroundings Westwards. Abraham and his posterity are for Josephus factors in this westward advance. The idea of the particular connexion between the Jews and India characterized also earlier Jewish Mellenist literary works, which (like those of Josephus) were inherited and preserved by Christianity. Josephus attributed himself to Pharisees, founders of Rabbinical Judaism; yet he became a highly respected and influential source of information for the early and medieval Christians.

Thus the least we can say is that, in the time of the separation between Judaism and Christianity, both currents felt their spiritual similarity to India.

When we come to define the starting point of the spiritual connexion between India and Palestine, we possess now information which was not available to Josephus and his contemporaries. Palestine of the Patriarchal Age was penetrated and influenced by a lateral current of the Vedic Indians, during their migration to India. Those Indo-Aryan captains of chariotry entered Palestine and Egypt with the same Hyksos conquerors to whom the patriarchal Hebrews were attached. Indo-Aryans headed the patricians of Palestine during the five hundred years preceding the Israelite occupation of this country. A third of the local notables was called then by Sanskrit names. Thus it is intrinsically impossible to suppose an absence of strong cultural links. I believe that some Biblical ideas cannot be properly understood without attention to this early Indic heritage.

An example is the holiness of Zion. Zion was not the Temple hill, used by the Israelites for worship since David and Solomon. It was the more southern elevation where the royal citadel stood since pre-Israelite times. For the Vedic Indians the stronghold of the chieftain was also the high place, where sacrifices were offered. The last non-Israelite chief in Jerusalem was called indeed by the Indic name of Arannah (Arawana). This pre-Israelite tradition of royal theocracy is summed up by the Bible in the tale of Melchizedek. It influenced the ideas connected with the Davidic monarchy.

Moreover, the Psalms and the prophets often refer to Zion as to the lofty mountain from which the king of glory, lord of hosts, thundering and rain-producing chariot-rider, overlooks the earth. The Bible never explains why and how the small hill is identified with the cosmic mountain. But everything recalls Mount Meru of the storm-god Indra, lord of armies, replaced by the God-Creator Visnu. Mount Meru was normally symbolized by royal citadel hills.

Another Indic feature is the retirement to the wilderness for spiritual purification, notably before an important mission. The idea was known in Canaan of the Patriarchal Age, where it occurs in the famous collection of myths from the city of Ugarit. It became much more frequent in the Israelite literature (the Old Testament): not only as individual experience of such prophets as Moses and Elijah, but also as collective purge of Israel. Such a purge took place before the occupation of Palestine. Its renewal was expected by Moses (2 : 14), Micah (4 : 10) and Ezekiel (20 : 35). The Indic heritage of the Patriarchal Age appears to be reinforced, indeed, by subsequent Israelite connexions with the Indian Ocean, as under Solomon.

In the Hellenist and later times continuation was provided by the Essenic communities, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the desert experience of John the Baptist and Jesus, the spread of Christian hermits and monastic communities from the deserts of Egypt and Judea, and the Qur'anic idea that Abraham sought to purify his descendants by settling them in "a barren valley" near Allah's house (chapter 14, *Abraham*). Throughout these times the old heritage was reinforced by new information on Indian ascetics and monks, which was flowing into the Middle East since Megasthenes' exploration of India round about 300 B.C.

In Judea of the Jesus times the appeal of the wilderness was combined with various other methods of spiritual progress which are classical in India. We find the wandering group of disciples under the guidance of their master, the sedentary group, the monastic community, the hermit. Relations between disciples and their *rabbis* closely resembled those usual between Indian disciples and their *gurus*. The connexion with India was freely recognized. On the Day of Atonement, the annual fast when the greatest purification was required from the high priest of the Jerusalem Temple, he used to put on an Indian garment. An anonymous Jew had diffused by his *Book of Jubilees* the view that Asia is the blessed part of the world, and India is particularly near to the mountain-garden of Eden, which is "the holy of holies, and the dwelling of the Lord" (8 : 16-23).

Josephus identified the Biblical Paradise-river of Pison with the Ganges. He placed in India and to its north (the Seres country) the ancient Children of Seth: peaceful and happy discoverers of science. In the same India-Seres area he located the earliest sedentary children of Eber. (The Hellenist notion of the Seres country was influenced both by the northward expansion of the Indic culture in that time and by the Indic idea of the blessed northern country of Uttarakuru.)

Since those times descriptions of the Paradise in the Abrahamic faiths freely used Indic ideas. Dante's image of the enormous mountain rising out of the Ocean follows that idea of Mount Meru which was particularly preferred by the Buddhists. The continental Asian mountain (or mountainous region) was more popular among medieval Western writers and map-makers, as it was in India. The Qur'anic descriptions of the Paradise, with trees constantly covered with fruits, beautiful women, and rivers of milk and pure water, read as a simplified version of the *Ramayana* (4 : 43) and *Mahabharata* (6 : 7) tales about the happy Uttarakuru land to the north of Mount Meru. The Indian spiritual greatness early became a stimulating example for movements within the Abrahamic milieu. Josephus tells that when the last Jewish fighters for freedom from Róme were demanded (at the besieged mountain fortress of Massada) to die by their own hands rather than give up liberty, India was recalled to them by their commander as a country where mere physical survival is not important.

The Gospel tells about Wise Men from the East who were guided by a star to the child Christ. For the men and women of that age the tale meant that the eastern birthland of the spiritual civilization had recognized the fruit of the latter's Westward expansion and development, as led by the posterity of Abraham. In the Hellenist usage the term "Magi" included the Indian wise men. Astronomy is mentioned by Josephus as the chief science developed there by the children of Seth.

At the same time that these events were taking place among the Jews, information about the Indian spiritual life was flowing into the Alexandria-centred Gentile spiritual world of the Mediterranean. It stimulated there the growth of Neo-Pythagoreanism, Neo-Platonism and Hermetism. These movements also developed such forms of spiritual training and progress. They too acknowledged their debt to India, notably by descriptions of the pilgrimages of Pythagoras and Apollonius of Tyana to that country. The common Indic heritage strongly contributed to the subsequent merger of Gentile and Israelite spiritual traditions.

Alexandria of the second or third century A.D. was probably the place where the famous *Alexander Book* of Psendo-Callisthenes was written. This is a philosophical romance seeking to diffuse the knowledge of the Eastern (and particularly Indic) wisdom and glory by the means of travel descriptions. Alexander is not there a Western invader but a descendant of Eastern rulers, who unifies the East and its wisdom. His conquests are an armed pilgrimage, culminating in his talks with the wise and ascetic Brahmans and in his visit to the rear mountains of Paradise. He dies as a true guru, among his disciples. Pessimism of the declining Roman Empire is replaced by the optimism-inspiring image of India. India was (in accordance with Josephus) the original political and cultural centre of the world, and it maintains this position at least spiritually: the Brahmans are the surviving remnant of the children of Seth. India is believed to be able to guide not only groups and communities but countries and empires. Apollonius was said to have found out a castle or monastery of wise men on the Ganges, but the *Alexander Book* attributes to the Brahmans a country of their own, and the pilgrim Alexander is a world conqueror.

The *Alexander Book* was throughout the Middle Ages a common property of the Abrahamic faiths and one of the most read books. It was a source of inspiration for many writers and poets. It was a means by which Indic ideas influenced the rise of medieval theocracies. The latter were definite efforts to establish a more charitable and moral world than the pagan Roman Empire, and they did much in spite of their failures. They were supposed to continue or restore the shape of the original priestly kingdom established by the children of Seth, which is referred to by the Jewish Hellenist *Books of Enoch*, *Josephus*, and the *Alexander Book*.

Such a theocracy was established by the Qur'an. The latter spoke to populations acquainted with Indic ideas through oral transmissions of literary information and by the means of contemporary trade travels. The Qur'an does not explain why the Muslims must fast (during the Ramadan month) on days but can break the fast nightly: this rule was known from the *Alexander Book's* description of the ascetic Brahmans. The Qur'an (18th chapt: The Cave) attributes to Moses a difficult pilgrimage to a very distant "Junction of the two Seas". Semitic words for "Sea" designate also other large waters, and the Arabic of Egypt and the Sudan still applies this designation to the Nile. No holiness was ever attributed by the Arabs to any of the sea junctions bordering on Arabia or elsewhere. Thus the Qur'an refers to the Indic idea of pilgrimages to the holy junctions of two rivers, especially on the Ganges.

Why did the Abrahamic faiths continue to be so important for the Westward diffusion of Indic ideas ? The reason seems to be as follows. The Middle East of the second millennium B.C. largely shared with the historical India the belief in One God, who is worshipped in different forms and cults, One in Many, God who can be called "gods", Elohim in Biblical Hebrew, Ilani in Akkadian texts from Ugarit, etc. The prophet Malachi (1 : 11) still said in the fifth century B.C., when the great Persian kingdom connected Israel with India: "From the sunrise-place to the sunset-place My (God's) name is great among the peoples, and everywhere incense is offered to My name, and a pure offering". (This feeling and its reasons were later so forgotten that, e.g., the King James Bible uses here in English the future tense, and it transforms this verse into a prophecy about the future conversion of heathen Gentiles.) We find in the Hebrew Bible a strong insistence on the oneness of God, a strong opposition to fetishism, but no criticism of the higher forms of non-Israelite religious thought.

However, during the first millennium B.C., and particularly in the Hellenist and Roman times, the Middle East was invaded by cults opposed to the idea of one God. The Graeco-Roman philosophy was mostly monotheistic, but peculiar to an educated minority and complying with the opposed public cults. Abrahamism found itself isolated in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. It met information about India as about a lost and rediscovered member of family, the connexion to whom had not been obliterated by the intermediate separate evolution.

Indeed, the very separation of Abrahamic religions largely corresponds to the divergence of various schools of Indic thought. The rise of Christianity took place among those Jews who were particularly near to the Vaisnava ideas. The term of "the Son of Man" was used by them in the same sense as Narayana in India: viz, for the personal spirit who is the supreme, the Absolute, God, and who is also particularly connected with creation, thus corresponding to Logos in Greek; and who is also the divine Saviour, incarnated in human form. His message emphasizes devotional faith (*Bhakti* in India) more than work and learning: a typical Vaisnava idea, appearing in the Gospel tales and extensively exposed by St. Paul. Converts are made among the humblest classes rather than among the ruling and wealthy,—again a typical Vaisnava mode displayed in Assam since the sixteenth century just as in Palestine in the first. And, of course, the entire background of the wandering group of disciples who give up their property to be able to follow their master, of sin-removing river baptism, etc., is strongly reminiscent of India,—not to speak of the Wise Men of the East, who know all about the Son of Man and his expected incarnation.

The Vaisnava doctrine of the Saviour's reincarnation was also known in this environment. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain references to the Teacher of Righteousness, whose personality, activity and persecution recall Christ, but who lived some time before 60 B.C. The early Jewish Rabbinical tradition ignores Jesus of the Gospel, and it attributes the foundation of Christianity to another Jesus, whose time corresponds to that of the Teacher of Righteousness. The only possible interpretation seems to be that the two Jesuses were believed by many to be the same reincarnated person, carrying on the same task. Anyway, the general doctrine was known later to Judeo-Christian sectarians and is alluded to in their writings (Psendo-Clement).

It may be of interest that Rabbinical Judaism was developed in academies situated on that caravan way (from Palestine to Babylonia) whose continuation led to the old Brahmanic North Indian centres of the study of the divine revelation, where strict adherence to its laws was enforced, and the rules of ritual and spiritual purification were strongly observed. The corresponding Israelite rules, dating from the time when Israel was proclaimed at Sinai "a kingdom of priests", were particularly obeyed and developed by the Pharisees and their Rabbinical successors. The similarity of spiritual atmosphere is emphasized by the belief of the Pharisee Josephus in the Indian origin of Judaism, and·by the Talmud's respect for "the Wise Men of the South", the Brahmans (referred to in connexion with Alexander).

The trend of the early Islam was towards an abstinent and charitable fellowship, in the spirit of the *Alexander Book's* description of the ascetic Brahmans, but more moderately. The term "Brahmans" was pronounced in the medieval Greek vernacular as "Rahmans",—as we know particularly from its uniform shape in Slavic translations. Arabian "false prophets", who sought to compete with Muhammad, called themselves indeed "Rahmans": the Yemeni prophet at-Aswad was "Rahman of Yemen", Musailima was merely "Rahman". Muhammad avoided any confusion by using the term "Rahman" in its semitic sense only, "Merciful", and for God.

All the three medieval Abrahamic religions supposed that their purest and most glorious forms survive in India or near it. Christians placed there the empire of Prester John, Jews put there the lost Ten Tribes. Abraham Farissol (1524) located the latter on the upper Ganges, identified by him with the legendary Jewish holy river of Sambation. Muslims placed in the Indian Islands the glorious remnant of the Sassanid Empire (considered as pre-Muhammadan Muslim since the poet Firdausi), as in the Arabian Nights' introduction,—or a refuge of the pious posterity of Muhammad and Ali.

India was thus frequently a supreme aim of pilgrimages. A Russian folk-poem causes the hero Dyuk to meet pilgrims to India. An Icelandic Saga brings the hero Eirik to the land of eternal life beyond India.

India symbolized also brotherhood and spiritual progress above specified religions. Thinkers particularly used or imitated then that variant of the descriptions of Brahmans which had been produced by Lamblichus in the second century B.C. in the happy Sun Island. Thus the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (fourteenth century) describes the Brahmanic Island, not Christian and yet representing the purest and holiest way of life. The Brahmans were sometimes called in the medieval Christendom "Islanders".

The Indic influence was reinvigorated by new streams of information. Thus ascetic trends were influenced by the tale on the Indian prince guided to pious life by a hermit. This tale utilized the lives of Buddha, but was written (in its various shapes among different religions) as a message of India, not of Buddhism.

It is often difficult to distinguish within Sufism ideas derived directly from India, because this Muslim movement was influenced also by returning waves of those Indic ideas which had been adopted by Christians, Jews, and others. Orthodox Christianity regards God as "the Truth", the true nature of things, present everywhere, seen by saints, and containing mankind and the entire cosmos within its Glorious Corps of the Lord. There too the way to God is a "method", including training in respiration, rhythm and body postures.

A particularly important period of spiritual activity in Abrahamic religions was when the links with India were strengthened by the rise of the spice trade since the twelfth century. Islam constituted then dervish fraternities, the West—Mendicant orders of friars, Judaism—The Qabbalist movement, out of which the modern Hasidism grew. People rose then more often above traditional walls between religions, as e.g. the daring sufic Persian poetry attests. Humans were considered as sparks of the Deity, hence equal and holy. It was the time when in India itself Ramananda, Chaitanya, and others proclaimed fraternity of human beings; such Islamic poets as wrote that "all men are created from one essence", such rabbis as Isaac Abravanel demanded equality and freedom for all, and asserted supremacy of republics over monarchies; and the Christian West dreamt about democracy and socialism. Rousseau's idea of Social Contract was but a revival of the one already spread in Europe in that time, notably by Marsilins of Padua.

This period came to an end when the West, having discovered the maritime way to India, was so blinded by the possibilities to exploit its wealth as to become uninterested in learning from it. The West paid for this change an exceedingly heavy price: its own spiritual and social progress was interrupted for centuries in important respects, as the above-cited example shows. A return both to the progress in these respects and to the interest in the Indian culture came into being since the eighteenth century. It was this evolution which, very gradually, prepared the ground for Vivekananda's appearance and triumph in the West.

ISLAM

Kazi Abdul Wadud
Calcutta

I am thankful to the organizers of the Centenary Celebrations of the great Swami Vivekananda for asking me to speak on Islam in the Parliament of Religions arranged on the occasion. The responsibility could very well be placed on abler shoulders. I have, however, accepted the offer humbly as a call to duty which often comes unsought. May the Lord of all the worlds and of all hearts guide us on the right path.

It is in the fitness of things that a Parliament of Religions, in other words, a friendly gathering of the lovers of all faiths, should be held to commemorate the hundredth birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda who like his great Guru was a true lover of all religions. Fortunately, our Indian tradition in regard to the relationship of faiths has been tolerant and often markedly appreciative. In ancient India a workable union of the fair-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned Non-Aryans could be effected, which was no mean achievement when we take into account the intractable nature of the problem even in the Twentieth Century, and in medieval India the union was markedly closer: Akbar, the great Mughal, built in his harem temples for his Hindu Queens, and in the wider life of the country Hindus and Muslims often had spiritual guides in the opposite community without experiencing any social disabilities. And in the Nineteenth Century we had the unique spectacle of religious harmony in the endeavours of Keshab Chandra Sen one of whose disciples translated for the first time Muslim Scriptures and some other religious books into Bengali from the original Arabic and Persian sources; and Ghalik, the prince of Urdu poets, wrote in the same age: True religion consists in steadfast devotion; the Brahmin who dies in his temple deserves burial in the Kaba. Swami Vivekananda's great utterance that the Indian nation should have Vedantic brains and an Islamic body is in tune with those unforgettable sayings and doings.

But, unfortunately for us, these creative thoughts and endeavours gave way to political proclivities having immediate prospects of tempting gains with the result that in the Twentieth Century we were landed into really evil days. Awful misunderstandings and fault-findings and misgovernment and feuds turned our land into a veritable hell and led even to its partition. The older days with their limitations and also with their not-to-be-forgotten charms seem to have been lost for good.

But this adverse fate is peculiar not only to India of modern times, but also to modern civilized world. The West with all its wonderful scientific advancements underwent worst confusion of thought with consequent destruction of lives and possession, in an unprecedented scale. And this sorry state of affairs of the times is responsible for the rise of a powerful atheistic school of thought which claims that the way to human welfare, nay, even normal human existence, is no longer possible except through its totalitarian methods. The world has not been won over by this lop-sided and grim way of thinking, and its methods are not without blemishes. But its threat is not diminishing in strength because of the continuance of abject poverty and confusion of thought in the vast majority of the people of the world; and the cruel exploitation of the luckless by the crafty who very often belong to the 'haves' is not failing to lend poignancy to the situation.

So we find that not only religions but time-honoured spiritual values also are facing in this age a big challenge and the future worth and prestige of religious and spiritual values will largely depend on how they meet that challenge. Some may think that the economic aspect of our present-day maladies is being over-emphasised by us. But it is really not so. Says Mahatma Gandhi: "God Himself does not venture to come before the hungry man except in the form of food". The economic aspect is very often the determining aspect of life. Besides, economic ills are not wholly economic but largely spiritual also. True spirituality and injustice in any form whatsoever are irreconcilables. Let me now look into Islam and the ways of the Muslims and try to see if they are conscious of this new challenge of our age and mean to meet it. Discussion about religion can be meaningful in our age in such a context only. I have quoted the famous utterance of Swami Vivekananda in regard to Islam. It reveals Swamiji's insight into the vital powers of this faith. Of the major religions of the world Islam is the youngest and its emphasis on the practical aspect of every question is pronounced. It avoids miracles and mysteries to a very large extent. The Meccans asked the Prophet to show them the angels, to have his food direct from Heaven, to bring down divine punishment on the Meccans for their opposition to Islam, but the Prophet maintained consistently that he was a mortal and not possessed of miraculous powers, his only difference with them being that he received divine revelation for their guidance. About intricate things like soul or revelation this is the utterance of the Quran:

> They will ask thee concerning the Spirit (revelation). Say: The Spirit is by the command of my Lord, and of knowledge ye have been vouchsafed but little (17:85)

The Quran maintains the same attitude towards the metaphysical question: what God really is. It does not countenance such speculations.

It tells people not to enquire into the essence of God but to fix their attention on His attributes:

Allah's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them. (7 : 180).

A well-known saying of the Prophet runs thus: Imbue yourself with the attributes of God.

In other words, the Quran does not think that man is essentially God but wants him to be godlike. The Quran points unerringly to the evil propensities in man which can, according to its teachings, be curbed by man's complete submission to the will of God. In fact, this submission is, according to the Quran, the supreme way of man's fulfilment. Though imperfect, man had this singular fortune that the Spirit of God was breathed into him and he was made God's vicegerent on earth. He is not to bow before anybody except God; mighty things of nature such as the sun, the moon and the oceans, all have been made subservient to him. The great scientific achievements of our times point unmistakably to the validity of the Quranic assertion with only this difference that the modern man with his wonderful control over nature has so far failed to control himself. And why ? Because he has not, according to the Quarn, learnt to submit himself wholly to God, in other words, to His eternal Law of Good of all.

The Quran considers Islam, in other words, complete submission to God, to be the only way of man's fulfilment. It has been, declares the Quran repeatedly, the religion of all the prophets of the world. At the same time the Quran is conscious of differences of outlook among men which deserve to be respected. Says the Quran:

> "Revile not those unto whom they pray besides Allah lest they wrongfully revile Allah through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have We made their deed seem fair (6 : 109).

Again:

> "...And if Allah had pleased He would have made you (all) a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you (discretionary powers), therefore strive with one another to hasten to good deeds..." (5 : 48).

Again:

> "And say to My servants (that) they speak what is best; surely the devil sows dissensions among men; surely the devil is an open enemy to man" (17 : 53).

We have mentioned that the Quran emphasises the practical aspect of every question. Naturally enough, it stresses the organized aspects of life, for the individual is helpless unless he is backed by an organization. At the same time the Quran lays sufficient stress on the importance of the individuals; it lays stress on individual contemplation as much as on congregational prayers and points out clearly that the individual should not follow the path of the majority blindly:

> And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge, surley the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that (17 : 36).

An elaborate treatment of the teachings of the Quran is not possible today. But the brief account we have given of some of its cardinal principles will, we trust, give our listeners some idea at least of the outstanding worth of those principles. Swami Vivekananda wanted to have a man-making religion. I think the Quranic principles, alluded to, are really meant to be man-making. They avoid metaphysical abstraction conspicuously.

But the big question is: Have these principles taken adequate shape in the life of Mussalmans ? Have they, I mean, the principles, succeeded in making Mussalmans something like vicegerents of God on earth—of course we do not mean supermen, but men and women whom Muslims and non-Muslims alike can recognize to be able and energetic and full of understanding for fellowmen ?

That the Mussalmans as a brotherhood have praiseworthy things about them, particularly in their collective life, is admitted. But we cannot say that they are mindful of the great and life-giving objective set before them by the Quran—and that is a great shortcoming indeed. For people, not propelled by live thoughts and big urges, have somehow endangered their distinctive worth as well as their balance.

So the threat of our times which we have discussed earlier is real for Mussalmans also. Their commendable social structure cannot help them much as they lack the most important asset of life, namely, living thoughts. The two major communities of India, Hindus and Mussalmans, seem to be markedly deficient in two outstanding things of life. The Mussalmans' social life is fairly good, its structure is almost modern but as a brotherhood they have not experienced yet emancipation of the intellect which Europe experienced during the long years of her Renaissance—and thus, so to say, a rebirth which has ushered in the modern age. The Hindus, thanks to the exertions of their nineteenth-century stalwarts, have experienced that emancipation to a considerable extent, but the structure of their social life is still of the old world and their spirit, chaffing under unhelpful surroundings is often found to be impatient of discipline and creative thoughts.

The picture we have drawn of the intellectual and spiritual deficiencies of our people will not, we hope, be considered fantastic. But what's the remedy will perhaps be the general cry. We admit frankly that it is always hard to find out remedies as the malady or maladies are almost always, very old. But as the challenge is impatient we have to give a quick answer, and quick answers are not necessarily wanting in value because the value of an answer depends largely on the quality of apprehension of the question. If we feel that we have apprehended the meaning of the new challenge we should not take long to be ready with our reply.

The challenge is considered to be mainly economic. But in reality it is moral. Innumerable men and women have been and are still being denied justice—that is the plain position. Human nature with all its animality is moral, it cannot therefore tolerate such injustice for all time to come. This is precisely what the great religions also taught. But the teaching has so long been neglected and side-tracked. Time has come to rectify the mistake.

But how to do this rectification? This question is also considered to be very difficult—of course by those who do not mean to act. The imperative need is to realize that the injustice should no longer be tolerated. But how to end the injustice ?—Who will do it ? Why—those who feel the bite of the injustice. They are to will with all their hearts and minds that the injustice should be ended. Their will will go on revealing ways before them —will help life that way. Such men of will may not be counted by legions, but they are not insignificant in number and, fortunately, they are still to be found in every faith. Let them come forward and take the resolution that they mean to do honour to their faiths by dedicating themselves to the cause of justice and fair play for all (this being the most emphasised aspect of every religion) and they will have no truce with double dealing in any form. Such dedicated pioneers have always been the salt of the earth. The power of sincere and earnest thought is incalculable indeed.

The politicians who have now become the natural leaders of men, particularly politicians of "free" countries, should also think seriously as to what should be their line of action henceforward. As a rule they are votaries of expediency and not of truth because they are concerned with sterner aspects of politics and administration. But their love of expediency is bound to confine their attention to very narrow limits so much so that its pursuit will land them before long into futility. As there is no longer any prospect of meaningful life on earth unless men are convinced that the pursuit of narrow self-interest is nothing but idiocy, it is time that politicians realized their mistake and mended their ways. Their shunning of expediency and coming over to the way of truth and love will be a distinct gain in the new endeavour of fulfilment for mankind.

RELIGION IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Madam President, Revered Swamijis, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am very grateful to the Swami Vivekananda Centenary organisation, for giving me this opportunity to participate in this Parliament of Religions. I must confess, my participation will not make any contribution from my side. As a matter of fact, I have come here not to make any contribution myself, but to profit by the contributions made by others—the galaxy of spiritual and intellectual leaders—participating in this Parliament. The subject of my talk is Religion in the modern world.

I am afraid, it will be rash to attempt a definition of religion. In reality, we find different religions prevailing in this world. Each of them has got some philosophy—some beliefs, some rituals, some practices. It is also universally said that at the bottom, in the last analysis, all religions are one. I think, by religion we mean that religion which is above, and at the same time mostly common in fundamentals to, all these concrete systems of religion—like the vertex of a convex solid angle. Hence, religion, in the general sense, is bound to be abstract, absolute and eternal. What this eternal and absolute truth is, it is difficult to describe or define. It is, therefore, sometimes said that religion is practised to attain salvation, moksha, nirvan, to identify oneself with the supreme, to merge the individual soul with the universal soul and to seek the blessings of the Almighty—by whatever name, we may invoke Him. This had led to some abstract concepts like God, Soul, Reality, Heaven, Hell and so on. There are, of course, certain norms that have to be followed by the people in their day-to-day behaviour. No religion, for instance, will condone theft or murder whereas, on the other hand, all religions will insist on doing some meritorious works with reference not only to his fellow beings but also to lower animals. Hence, it is no wonder that religion (*dharma*, as contrasted with *adharma* or sin) in popular parlance has been almost identified with good behaviour, piety and service to the entire creation at large and with avoidance of ill-feeling and enmity.

Religion is not only general, abstract and absolute, it is also eternal. But some expositions, some emphasis, some re-emphasis are bound to take place from time to time—from place to place. This is again why we find preachers, prophets and preceptors for the laymen. Religion is a matter of individual attainment and realisation and it cannot be imposed from outside except in forms and ceremonies. Some rituals may be prescribed, some behaviour may be ordained—but these externals should never be mistaken as the religion or the essence thereof. The conflict, wherever it exists or arises, is always concerning the exterior and not regarding the intrinsic and inherent truth. Hence it has been universally believed that the different religions are essentially one and the same. It is true that these differences were too much emphasised originally and the different religious systems tended to be exclusive—leading to rivalry, jealousy and even antagonism. There was perhaps some psychological justification for laying stress on the external ceremonies and formalities. They could give some exclusiveness and distinctness to each system adopted by each sect. But they had been too much exaggerated, so much so that they were likely to mislead any person to the extent that form itself was religion. Fortunately, today there is better understanding, greater tolerance and also less exclusiveness and tensions. With the spread of knowledge and improvement in communication, social and cultural intercourse is more frequent—with the result that narrowness and bigotry are disappearing—promising a healthier co-existence, a deeper sympathy and mutual understanding.

In ancient and medieval societies, the ordinary run of people used to blindly believe in religions and religious dogmas without caring or being able to know the rational basis behind them. But subsequently man began to better understand and more closely examine the truth by applying logic and reason; many differences then appeared to be more unreal than real. Hence, the tendencies to narrowness and exclusiveness were effectively checked and arrested.

It is perhaps more or less true that in the earliest society both in the East and the West, religion played the most important part. Its appeal to and influence over the people were supreme and almost exclusive. People were more simple and sincere; their wants were few and diversions fewer. They could devote themselves to the pursuit of religion without any interruption or hindrance. But in course of time, the position changed. The influence of religion was largely usurped by politics. After a rivalry between the church and the state, the latter emerged as the more powerful of the two. By church in the present context, I mean the religious institutions in general—both of the East and of the West. In the East, in the same sense, kingship gradually replaced priesthood in point of superiority. There is no doubt that in the earliest stage, religion was sought and practised for the sake of religion alone, that is to say, self-realisation, spiritual attainment and self-contentment. This spiritual appeal lost much of its force when the political organisations could be available with state leaders in rulers and governors. The next stage of the evolution of the human society, with the advent of democracy, was the predominance of economic rather than political interest or force. The political parties and their supremacy could be sustained only when the people could be kept contented and satisfied and for this purpose the political leaders had to look to the economic interests of the people—their material prosperity and elevation. One of the reasons why people became more and more indifferent to religious pursuits and speculations, in course of time, was their absorption in day-to-day struggles and competitions for existence and survival. Hence unless the economic wants are satisfied and the bare necessaries of life are ensured, there cannot be any profitable and successful talk of religion. This is exactly what was emphasised by Swami Vivekananda in the following terms:

"No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well-educated, well-fed and well-cared for... First bread and then religion. We stuff them too much with religion when the poor fellows have been starving. No dogmas will satisfy the cravings of hunger ...Material civilization, nay even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread ! Bread ! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven. India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny. More bread, more opportunity for everybody."

Thus religion cannot and should not be sought—away from the society or the people. One might retire to the Himalayas and devote oneself to religious practices and speculations. But Swami Vivekananda did not and could not choose this path. Hence, whatever the form of government and whatever the condition of the society, religion should be meant for the spiritual and material uplift of all. Individual achievement and realisation are meaningless unless they are utilised for the guidance and amelioration of the society and the country in their entireties.

Again every religion, in concrete shape, was more or less originally preached by one individual leader and in course of time, these religions could develop only through and with the help of some organised institutions. Or, in other words, religion was institutionalised. This is how we got the temples, the Maths, the churches and the mosques. These institutions again, in their turn, were originally, exclusively religious and sacerdotal, though in course of time, their activities were expanded, to embrace more and more secular items, like education, medical relief, social service and so on. Greater emphasis was laid on intellectual and social benefits rather than merely on religious rituals and practices. One might almost say that emphasis was shifted from God to man. In the earlier stages of humanity, religion was concerned more with God and the different forms of His worship, but in the later stages of evolution, the material aspects of human welfare and progress were emphasised. It is no longer so much to invoke the blessings or pleasures of God, as it is to serve humanity in all conceivable

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ways. Originally, even the abstract religious faith alone could have a sufficient appeal and followers and votaries could be attracted, even without any offer of any tangible material benefit. This even otherwise also implies a greater emphasis on the material aspects rather than on the spiritual aspects alone. This is much more objective and useful. Of course, it does not mean that people are never attracted by spiritual thoughts alone. Swami Vivekananda also believed in the strength of Indian spiritualism as well as the importance of western materialism. He wanted a happy and fruitful blending of the two for the regeneration of India. "Do you know", asked Swamiji, "What my idea is ? By preaching the profound secrets of Vedanta religion in the western world, we shall attract the sympathy and regard of the mighty nations, maintaining for ever the position of their teachers in spiritual matters and they will remain our teachers in all material concerns." The great monk Swami Vivekananda had given a great and confident lead in thus identifying religion with service—educational, medical or otherwise. In the words of Swamiji himself, service to the masses is service to God and service itself is religion. "Where should you go to seek God", asked he, "are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak Gods ? Why not worship them first ? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges ? . . . Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of God and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel that millions are starving today and millions have been starving for ages ? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud ?" Thus Swamiji preached and practised service as religion. He could easily see oneness in the whole of humanity not only of this country but of the whole world. Hence his teachings were meant not for our motherland alone, but for the other countries of the world as well. His teachings did not imply only national integration of which we are hearing so much today, they also implied what may be characterised as global or world integration. It is for this wide catholicity of human sympathy, that his teachings equally appealed to the different peoples of the different countries. An Indian spiritual leader like Swamiji, alone could address a world congregation as "Brothers and Sisters". It was not a mere accident that he could have life-long disciples in different countries and could be instrumental in establishing innumerable centres of Ramakrishna Math and Mission in different and distant parts of the world.

As referred to above, Swami Vivekananda also could not find any difference or discrimination in any form of religion. All forms of religions were equally effective and profitable, if sincerely followed. The sameness of all religions was emphasised by him thus:

"As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

"Whosoever cometh to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him, all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me."

Religion has been always a great force and it will continue to remain so even in this material world of today. Religion can even now give some consolation to the afflicted and the bereaved. Even now people frequent places of pilgrimage and contact sadhus and Mahantas to receive inspiration and consolation from them. Let us hope and pray, a day will come, when the world will succeed to discard disputes including war as Ashoka the Great did, after the battle of Kalinga. Love and Ahimsa will then replace conflict and war. This is feasible only through the supreme influence of religion.

The greatest contribution of Swami Vivekananda, as it has been seen above, is the global integration—equality of all men. Hence the popularity and success of his appeal. Swami Vivekananda popularised the Vedanta and actually applied it in a scientific and objective way. The result was that it could readily and irresistibly appeal to all—irrespective of the religion professed by an individual. This teaching and exposition of Vedanta by him served the most useful purpose of getting at the essence of all religions, ignoring the differences in details. The details could be ignored in favour of the essence, the form in favour of the substance and the letter in favour of the spirit thus leading at once to the common and essential attribute of all religions.

The most important significance of the equality of men as part and parcel of God (individual soul and the universal soul) will be undoubtedly helping the world one day to realise the necessity that all conflicts and disputes—religious, political or otherwise—are unreal. Hence it is destined to lead to the constitution of one world-state, one family and one brotherhood.

Let this be the goal of religion today, as envisaged by the seer and prophet, Swami Vivekananda.

"Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

RELIGION IS ONE

CAPTAIN BHAG SINGH
Editor, The Sikh Review, Calcutta

WORTHY PRESIDENT, BROTHERS & SISTERS,

Today, it is my proud privilege to sit by the world's great scholars, and address this Parliament of Religions being held as a part of centenary celebrations of that Lion-Sage Vivekananda, whose roar in the first Parliament of Religions in 1893 resounds with the same clarity even today, for he spoke the "Wisdom of the East" that remained and shall remain ever fresh.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not profess to be a scholar of any degree, but being a soldier by profession, I look upon religion as practical and disciplined living which inspires courage of conception, conviction and realization. It is perhaps for this practical outlook that most of the Sikh divines and saints come from the ranks of the soldiers.

My paper, therefore, may have nothing much of philosophical value but of practical consideration, and my subject is "Religion is One" which I present to you as I have been able to understand it in my littleness from the great Book of Wisdom, The *Guru Granth:*

It is stated in *Guru Granth:*

chi ghar chi gur chi updesh
gur gur eko ves anek
jai ghar karte kīrati hoī
so ghar rākh vadāī toī
visue casā ghaḍiaṅ thithī vārī māhu bhayā
sūraj eko ruti anek nānak karte ke kete ves

"There are six Hindu Schools of Thought, each having its own *guru* (founder) and its own doctrine. The *Guru* of all *gurus*, however, is One but His manifestations are many.

(He is the *Guru* of all *gurus* because it is from Him that all *gurus* had their inspiration and enlightenment culminating in the religions they founded.)

(In these lines the Hindu systems of philosophy are being mentioned. But, the conclusion applies to every other religion, its founder and its doctrine, because all these are His manifestations.)

(Brother), in whatever School the glories of the Creator are sung, accept it as thy own. In this lies (the secret) of thy advance. (This is the crux of Guru Nanak's view of what makes a true religion. If this were kept in view all religions would become one and the labels would lose their significance.)

As there are one Sun and many seasons wherein are *visās*, *casās*, *ghaḍīs*, *pehars*, lunar and week days (division of time into its fragments), so O Nanak, there is one God although He has many forms. (That is, God does not limit Himself to one form and sends messages to the world from time to time. All religions come from the one Divine Source, of course in varying degrees of their purity in the process of transmission, as also according to the capacity of those through whom they come.

Religion has to deal with man and the problems he is called upon to face in life and, to provide suitable answers to those problems. In spite of differences of race, colour, sex and nationality and of circumstances under which people live and work out their problems, the solution of those problems and their ultimate destiny are the same and, therefore, their religions, in the essential aspects, cannot be very different. The message of religion, must, of necessity, be of a universal nature with its appeal for all. Also, since man is continually evolving, his religion must grow into a synthesis of all that had gone before it. It cannot afford to be too rigid and inelastic, otherwise, it will lose vitality and perish. Barring absolute essentials, it has otherwise to remain in a perpetual process of renewal and should, therefore, have the capacity to shed off the outworn old in order to be rejuvenated in the new. Truth, therefore, must always express itself in different ages through different seers and sages. God reveals Himself in the souls of seers in diverse ways from time to time. He is a transcendental Being and, though immanent, remains unknowable in entirety, as His Personality has diverse and unfathomable aspects. Mystics and seers could not help visualising in their visions different pictures of Him according to their own light and expressing even different accounts of the vision they had. It is this vision which is the basis of all religions. But the richness of the religious experience cannot be expressed in words. Also due to differences of training, tastes, temperament and the nature of the perceiving minds the visions could not be exactly the same. Guru Gobind Singh says:

āp apnī budhi hai jetī
barnat bhin bhin tahi tetī

"Men according to different understandings have given different descriptions of Thee, O Lord."

When the experiencer tries to recapture the vision he had, it eludes him. There is nothing in his worldly experience to which the vision would correspond or to which it could be similar. Therefore, when he comes to the intellectual plane to describe himself he has to employ metaphors, figures and symbols. The vision thus reduces itself to only the interpretations of personal experience of its founder and has to be symbolic in the very nature of things. The Truth thus revealed is not the result of any logical or intellectual reasoning but the interpretation of the spiritual vision of a Light that did illumine the interpreter but which could not be communicated in its actuality through the medium of the language. The revelation being subject to so many limitations of ideas, emotions, understanding, prejudices and power of grasp of the perceiving mind, its descriptions reaching us conflict here and there with one another. Only the perfect Master could reveal it in its purest form. But spiritually speaking, they may all be considered as leading to Him just as all rivers lead to the same ocean. The Guru says:

sūraj eko ruti anek
nānak karte ke kete ves

As there are one Sun and many seasons, so, O Nanak, there is but one God although He appears in many forms.

In the *Gītā*, Shri Krishna says, "In whatever form men worship me I look after them in that form. Men worship me in many ways but they all reach me." Arjuna was told figuratively that the Supreme Power dwelt on the top of a high mountain and there were many paths leading to the summit.

Those who professed different faiths, endeavoured and reached it by following different ways leading to the same Ultimate Goal. Cows and goats may have different colours but the colour of their milk is white. So also Truth revealed at different times by different prophets, spiritually speaking, is the same. Therefore it is not wise to create divisions by taking the rigid view that only a particular kind of vision or intuitive experience, which, after all, is of a personal nature, is the only true experience and that others are wholly illusory or imperfect. Everyone should be given the right to interpret God in terms of his own experience. This fact must never be lost sight of if a right approach to religion is desired. The Sikh Gurus recognised the fundamental Truth that God having diverse manifestations had not exhausted His store of revelations with any one of them and, each revelation was capable of inspiring and enriching mankind. Howsoever much forms of worship may differ, all religions have in their own manner shown the way whereby man may find God. According to Guru Gobind Singh there was an essential unity behind the so-called diversity of all world religions.

dehorā masīt soī pūjā au namāz ohī

The temple and the mosque are the same;
The Hindu worship or the Muslim Nimaz are the same.

The universal Truths of moral and spiritual nature are accepted and stressed by all religions in spite of differences in detail and application. At least, they all agree on what the right code of human conduct should be and how a man should behave towards his fellow beings. They have at times stirred men's hearts to the depths, cured the sickness of their souls and given strength and inspiration for healthful living on earth and beyond earth. They are, in fact, the daily bread of life for mortals who would otherwise behave like beasts. If rightly understood they can prove lamps to light men's paths and to kindle the dormant spark into men's souls. If the light of religion were allowed to disappear, men would be lost in a wilderness. This light has furnished standards of morality and conduct that have saved men from becoming beasts, pouncing on each other's throats. Thus all faiths and their scriptures in themselves present ideals worthy of attainment. Anything that elevates man at the stage he is, is good for him. This is the Sikh view of life. Guru Nanak says:

jagat jalandā rākh le
prabh apnī kirpā dhār
jit duāre ubre tit le ubhār

O Merciful Lord, save the burning world in Thy grace and lift the man by whatever path he chooses to come to Thee.

The Gurus never preached in any fanatical manner the superiority of their own faith, even though they recognised this superiority by accepting and propagating the Sikh view of life. They knew that the fanatical image of real or supposed superiority renders the outlook narrow and morbid and kills initiative, vitality and independence. They admitted other points of view with the same veneration as was accorded to their own, provided they were basically in conformity with Truth and helped man to realise himself. They accepted the hymns of other divine men of different faiths for incorporation in the *Holy Granth* making it the exponent of universalism. Guru Tegh Bahadur died a martyr to protect a faith which was not his own because he believed that all men had the right to choose their own form of belief. Voltaire wrote to Rousseau when the latter was in trouble on account of the views he had expressed, that although he did not agree with a word that Rousseau had said yet he would defend to death his right to say it.

It should be realised that religion cannot live through crystallisation of thought. New ideas should be allowed to take roots to suit new conditions. Conservatism and rigidity on non-essentials hinders growth and kills vitality. Freedom of thought and respect for Truth, wherever it may be, are the signs of a living religion. Truth being universal, there could be no question of a monopoly or the privilege of a few. Dogmatism produces unhealthy competition and an unholy urge to advance at the cost of others by all means, fair or foul. The philosophy of love, toleration and universal brotherhood is then forgotten. The so-called holy and aggressive wars have been the outcome of this fanatical approach. Bertrand Russell says: "Hatred and wars come largely of fixed ideas or dogmatic faith. The distinctive feature of an unintelligent man is the hastiness and the absoluteness of his opinions. The scientist is slow to believe and never speaks without modifications."

Socrates asserts: "Philosophy begins when one learns to doubt—particularly to doubt one's cherished beliefs, one's dogmas and one's axioms." He went so far as to declare: "One thing only I know and that is that I know nothing."

But fanatics go to the other extreme. They will not tolerate difference of opinion and compel regimentation of thought. Methods of violence and religious persecution have been tried on a large scale though they have miserably failed. Prejudices and beliefs of ages cannot be changed except through love.

Guru Nanak insisted on the inner life and not on any particular label, and thus founded supranational religion which we in this generation, with our extremely narrow outlook, have not only nationalised, but have even provincialised to a very dangerous extent. For Guru Nanak the religion he founded was to be the religion of man and not of any egoistical provincial group impervious to healthy influences of other people and other faiths. When Guru Nanak met a Hindu he said to him, "Be such a Hindu." When he met a Jain he said to him, "Be such a Jain." To the Muslims he said, "Be such a Muslim":

> He whose acts accord with his faith,
> And whose heart is free from pride and greed,
> Untroubled by the two impostors, life and death
> Ever resigned to the will of God.
> Knowing Him ever to be the Doer of all acts,
> Freed from the domination of self-love,
> And compassionate to all living creatures,
> Such a one may truly call himself a Muslim.

Labels, to Guru Nanak, did not matter if they advanced spiritual life. The religion of God has no label. Guru Gobind Singh says:

Namastaṁ amjape

"Salute Him who is without the label of religion."

The change was to be brought about in the content of the belief, if it were fallacious, and not necessarily in the label. So the Guru approached men of other faiths as one who belonged to them. The strongholds of superstition, hypocrisy and tyranny in the social and political fields had to be stormed but without becoming offensive in any manner. He was in every respect the essence of humility and sweetness and spoke to people kindly and affectionately. He had a Hindu and a Muslim as his constant companions in all his missionary tours. He would even adopt the technique and the terminology of other faiths, clothing them with a new significance which they could understand and appreciate. He told them that no people were the chosen of God and what really counted with Him was right conduct and truthful living and not the particular creed they professed. Profession of faith should always have its roots in the inner life. He went on pilgrimage to the holy places of both Muslims and Hindus. He covered the whole of India and went beyond. He carried his message of hope to all and in every nook and corner. In fact, he was the Guru of all mankind. Bhai Gurdas, a great theologian of the Guru's time says:

caḍiā sodhan dharti lokāī

"He set out to reform all mankind on earth."

Guru Nanak loved all and won their respect and admiration. When he died, both Hindus and Muslims claimed his earthly remains; one party claiming that he was a Hindu, and the other claiming that he was a Muslim.

His aim always was to unite all on the basis of the essentials of religion as distinct from outward forms, symbols or ceremonials, which are of value only if they promote spiritual development. When they are looked upon as ends in themselves they retard growth and produce morbidity. Here is a hymn of Guru Arjan Dev in *Rāg Gauḍī*, to clarify this aspect of religious life:

har bin awar kiriā birthe
jap tap sanjam karam kamāne ehi aurai mūse
bart nem sanjam mah rehtā tin kā ādh na pāiā
age clan avar nai bhāī ūhāṅ kam na āiyā
tirath nai ar dharnī bharamtā age thaur na pāvai
ūhai kam na avai eh bioi oho logan hi patīāvai
cater bed mukh bacnī ucrai āge mahal na pāiai
būjhe nāhī ek sudhākhar oho saglī jhākh jhakhāiai

"Without the Lord in mind, all pious needs are illusion; Without the Lord in mind recitations, austerities, disciplines, actions all are left here (and are not carried beyond); (Without the Lord in mind) fasting, rules of conduct, and observance of religious discipline are not worth half a penny. Hereafter the valuation of things is different and therefore these things do not count there. Bathing at holy places and wandering about on the earth can ensure no place hereafter. This way avails not there and at best may satisfy men of this world. (Without the Lord in mind), reciting from memory the four *Vedas* will not secure God's presence in the next world. If a man did not know the one Nectar-Word all the rest he knows is nonsensical prattle. Nanak expresses the view that the Guru should be served, the Name dwelt upon and the ego of the mind shed off. Whoever practises this view will cross the sea of life."

Here the Guru has listed all the so-called religious practices and exposed their hollowness if they did not help man to realise his true self which was the only thing that mattered. In any case, forms, rituals, doctrines, dogmas and books should not be allowed to create rift between men of different religious professions. He assailed all artificial barriers between man and man and took his stand on the solid basis of universal brotherhood, which brooks no narrow loyalties of caste, race or creed. His teachings were not invested in the garb of a prophecy nor did he claim any special relationship with God. The whole emphasis was always on the inner life of the spirit which alone mattered and without which all the rest was sham.

Martin Luther in one of his letters writes, "Be a sinner and sin strongly, and yet more strongly believe and rejoice in Christ who is the conqueror of sin and death and the world. So long as we are in the world there must be sinning. This life is not the dwelling place of righteousness." By this Luther means that you can sin as much as you like while being religious. What you require is a strong faith. Faith alone will save you.

Guru Nanak, on the other hand, says, "No Guru, no prophet can save you if you sin consciously. Without a religious life based on strong ethical foundations and without virtue and goodness, religious life and spirituality are a mockery and hypocrisy."

Bacon says, "A little philosophy inclineth a man to atheism but depth in philosophy bringeth man's mind about to Religion."

Socrates says, "There is no real philosophy until the mind turns round and examines itself."

Swami Vivekananda puts it thus in a nutshell, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this by the path of action or of worship or of philosophy, by one or more or all and be free."

Spinoza says, "To be great is not to be placed above men but to stand above the partialities and futilities of uniformed desire and to rule oneself. Know thyself is the whole of religion and this religion belongs to the whole mankind. When a man learns to acquire a stilled mind, knows the value of his soul and builds for worship a quiet church within himself he will have learnt the true significance of religion."

Guru Nanak says:

man mañdar tan ves kalandar

"The mind is the true priest or anchoret within the temple of the body."

This is real religion and it belongs to all.

Sikhism aims at destroying barriers and to unite all: In *Śrī Rāg* the Guru says:

satigur aisā jāniai
jo sabh sai dei malāi jīo

"The True Guru is one who unites all !"

The Sikh faith emerging from such an approach was the synthesis of the best in Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In fact, it was broad-based on the essentials of all faiths it had come in contact with.

Critics unwittingly pay the Sikh Gurus a compliment when they declare that they had nothing new to offer to the world. They forget that Truth is never old: The Guru says: *sac purānā na thiai*, and *sac purānā hovai nāhī*

When, however, Truth gets mixed up with untruth it has to be revitalised and reinterpreted and then it is ever new. Saints and *rishis* that had gone before the Gurus, had already emphasised different aspects of Truth as they saw it. Islam, Advaitism of Shankaracharya, Bhakti cult of Vaishnavism and Yogic Schools of thought were already being preached in the land. Different cultures and civilisations had met at one place. They clashed and even tried to destroy each other. It was the Guru's privilege to synthesise the complex experience of his forefathers and, *Guru Granth* embodies that synthesis. The Guru went beyond India to Tibet, China, Ceylon, Burma, Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Egypt and Afghanistan and assimilated all that was good and true there. He accepted most of the doctrines, synthesising, enlarging and reinterpreting them and rejecting others which had become out of harmony with his integrated view of life. He possessed a deep analytical understanding that could go into the heart of things. Being an intellectual giant of keenest understanding combining with it an originality of mind, and being a rational thinker of exceptional power, he could separate the grain from the chaff with ease and naturalness peculiar to him, adopting, what was clearly sound and revising what was untrue or imperfect. How could a genius like him accept all that was passing as religion ?

Yet he stuck firmly to the view that all religions were in essence one. This is the unique Sikh attitude towards the so-called differences in religious creeds. In whatever way man approaches God he gets blessed. Only a sincere approach was needed. If that was lacking then whatever the form of worship, it led to hypocrisy. Religion is to be lived and not talked about, otherwise it will be mere lip homage and a worship not of Truth but of untruth. It was in this sense that he said:

na koī hindū na koī musalmān

"There was no Hindu and there was no Muslim."

Otherwise all faiths are good and true and have the capacity to inspire mankind.

It is, therefore, quite true to say that the background of Sikhism is both Aryan and Semitic. This is as it should be. But the whole presentation seems so distinct, revitalised and original, that the *Brāhmins* met Emperor Akbar in a deputation and represented that the Guru had abandoned the social and cultural customs of the Hindus and had even abolished caste system, on which Hinduism had its roots; he did not worship idols or the Hindu gods or *avatārs* (incarnations) nor offered water to the ancestors; he did not conform to the *Vedas* or other holy books of the Hindus; he did not recite *gāyatrī* nor recognise Sanskrit as the language of the gods, he had employed the spoken dialects and the languages of the people as the medium of expressing and discussing spiritual matters, he had rejected Hindu rituals and ridiculed the institution of priestly class, *havans* and sacrifices and had initiated a moral code distinct from the Hindu ethics.

Similarly, reports against the Guru having expressed views not in conformity with those held by the orthodox Muslims were made to the Emperor.

It is clear that the Guru's primary stress is always on the practice of religious life and not on formalism or ritualism. Truly religious people never quarrel over dogmas or forms of worship. For them love and service are the basis of religion from which charity and tolerance towards the views of others flow in a natural way. The Guru's gospel of love and universal brotherhood could thus become a panacea for the ills of the strife-torn world and could provide comfort against the materialism of the modern age. He carried his message not to a few saints, *pandits*, *yogis*, but to everybody who would like to become what God intended him to be.

All this showed that although Sikh philosophy and Sikh religion were greatly influenced by the currents of thought before the advent of Sikhism and most of all by the Hindu Vedānta yet a new spirit breathed through its teachings which gave it a new shape culminating in the loud protests and antagonisms from all quarters that had entrenched themselves behind the sham of faiths. The hypocrisy of renunciation, mechanical ways of worship, observance of empty rituals, meaningless penances, rites, forms and ceremonies, dogmatic systems of asceticism, mortification of the body, vows of celibacy, *yogik* feats acquired through mental and physical exercises and a hundred other things were denounced. The emphasis on essentials as distinct from the non-essentials had in itself constituted a new but living pattern and made it a dynamic faith with a message for all. The best in the Hindu and Muslim cultures and thought were combined and yet not wholly identified with the one or with the other so as to lose or confuse the Sikh ideals. Guru Arjan himself points out this distinction in *Rāg Bhairoṅ* thus:

vart na raho na mah ramdānā
tis sevī jo rakhai nidānā,
eko gosāī allaho merā
hindū turk dohāṅ neberā,
haj kābai jāoṅ na tīrath pūjā
eko sevī avar na dūjā

pūjā karo na navāj gujāro
ek nirankār lai ridhai namaskāro
na ham hindū na musalmān
alloh rām ke pind prān
koli kabīr ehī kīā vikhānā
gurpīr mil khud khasam pachānā

"I practise neither the Hindu way of fasting nor the Muslim way observed during the month of Ramzan. I serve only Him Who saves me in the end. The one Lord of the earth (*gosāiṅ*) is also my Allah. I have made my peace with both Hindus and Muslims. I do not go to Mecca for a pilgrimage nor do I worship at the Hindu holy places. I shall serve Him and no other, I do not worship idols or recite Nimaz. I cherish in my heart the Formless One. We are neither Hindus nor Muslims. Our bodies and souls are the gift from Allah Ram. Kabir makes the assertion that he had realised the Lord through meeting the *Guru* who was also the *Pīr*."

From the above it must not, however, be concluded that Sikhism ignores spiritual theories, philosophic doctrines and metaphysical aspects of religion. Practice of religion is not possible without the basic doctrines and therefore these are brought out in a simple and straightforward language. There is no mystery around them and they are of the utmost value in life. Aimless theorising and mere abstractions divorced from life and lacking practical value are not countenanced. The greatest truths are always the simplest. Only ignorant and insincere people make them appear intricate and difficult. Truths that put a living purpose into life and confer inner peace and spiritual power only matter. Yet, the view of the nature of the Ultimate Reality, the relationship of man with it, the aim of life and how it was to be realised, the theory of creation and so many other matters were all carefully examined, discussed and incorporated in the *Holy Granth:* but they were always related to life and not treated as airy things for the gymnastics of mind and intellect. The Gurus were impatient with that view or, for the matter of that, with any pursuit of philosophy, that did not have a practical bearing on life. Guru Nanak clearly says:

sac urai sabh ko upar sac ācār

"Truth is higher than everything but higher still is truthful living."

"Truthful living" is the basic requirement of all religions, hence "Religion Is One". Guru Nanak compares "truthful living" to a true gold coin that bears the Divine Seal acceptable in the Lord's Court. He tells us the process of minting truthful character thus:

If thou must make a gold coin true
Let thy mint these rules pursue:

In the forge of continence
Let the goldsmith be a man of patience,
His tools be made of knowledge,
His anvil made of reason;
With the fear of God the bellows blow,
With prayer and austerity make the fire glow,
Pour the liquid in the mould of love,
Print the name of the Lord thereon,
And cool it in the holy waters.
For thus in the mint of Truth the word is coined,
Thus those who are graced are to work enjoined.
O Nanak, by His blessing have joy everlasting.

BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMASAMBUDDHASSA
(Salutation to Lord Buddha)

Bhikkhu J. Kashyap
Sarnath, Varanasi

In a Parliament of Religions like this it would be advantageous if we forget our differences and join to consider in what does exist the common good of all of us and how we can co-operate for it.

This evening I wish to examine the same as a representative of Buddhism. What attracts our attention most in the present age is the wonders that are being performed by the material sciences, which, in the past, were thought to be possible only by the power of spirituality. This has led the modern generation to lose faith in religion and have it in material science. This is so true that we cannot close our eyes to it. This is a glaring challenge to Religion. If the religions continue to struggle amongst themselves for supremacy, one over the other, they will not be able to meet this common threat.

I think, it is high time for the religions to unite together and with mutual co-operation conduct a sincere exploration into the potentialities of the inner life of man. Scriptures of all religions give evidence of miracles being performed by the prophets and saints. The pages of the Tripitaka, the Pali Scripture of early Buddhism, are full of these, exhibited by the Buddha and the disciples—both monks and lay, both men and women. Once, King Ajatasattu asked the Buddha, we read in the Sāmaññaphala Sutta of the Dighanikāya,.... "Sir, the advantages of the different secular arts and crafts are evident before us; can you show me such an advantage of leading the hard life of a monk ?" And, the Buddha, while giving an enumeration of these, pointed out that his monk could perform miracles like ..making oneself invisible to others, passing freely through the walls and the hills, walking on the surface of water as on the solid ground, taking dips in the solid ground as in water, soaring high in the sky like a bird, reaching the moon and the sun, hearing sounds and seeing things from great distance, having a clear vision into the mind of others, remembering events of past lives and so on. There were occasions, often and on, when the Buddha did Himself give demonstration of these, for quelling an opponent or for winning the faith of others. Sometimes, He also ordered a disciple of His to give such demonstration for similar purposes.

This power is achieved by a perfectly concentrated mind, for which the Buddha has taught the full course of practice and culture. He has not laid stress on anything else so much as on the importance of it. The last words of

His were....पस्सथ भिक्खवे रुक्खमूलानि सुञ्ञागारानि वनय लानि, निसीथ झायथ ....O Monks, go, sit under a tree or in a secluded corner of the house or in a lonely forest and devote yourself to the practice of concentration.

After the Buddha, the tradition of the practice continued to live for centuries. Meditation centres thrived in the forests and caves of the country all over. But, gradually the method was forgotten, and its tradition was lost. Now we have got the description of it only in the book, but there is no teacher to give a practical guidance in its delicate process. Nevertheless, the clue to it is there, and it is possible for us to lead an exploration in that direction. There is no reason why we will not succeed if we pursue with full determination. The material science-is conducting research in the potentiality of an atom. The governments of big nations are bent upon it, and they are also attaining marvellous success. I think, it would be worth-while conducting research in the potentialities of our mind, in the same spirit of scientific quest. No costly set up will be required for it. All that will be necessary is to find out right type of zealous men and to provide them with the situations needed for it. There is no doubt that the potentiality of mind is much more than that of an 'atom,' and it is very likely that all the powers of mind will be got once more that the Buddha had and of which He had taught.

I wish I could give you a description of the method of the practice as we have it in the Tripitaka, but, I am sorry, the brief time at my disposal does not permit me to do it.

The end of perfecting concentration is not to have the miraculous powers, though they do come in the process of it. The exact end of it is to pierce into the deep nature of reality and realise it face to face, which cannot be done by the distracted mind of the average man. With the dawn of this realisation, he is freed from the influence of greedy selfishness, from ill-will, hate, anger and all such lower traits.

This reminds me of the definition of man in the Text book of logic,—man is a rational animal. This is very true of the average man. Inasmuch as a man is guided by selfish greed and blind anger, he is very much like any other animal. The eminence of man lies in his capability to conquer selfish greed by liberal generosity and to conquer blind anger by discreet kindness. The more he is able to do it the more rationality is realised in him; and the more he fails in it the more animal he is. Let us visualise a man purely rational, free from the faintest shade of animality, whose actions are motivated only by selfless generosity and unadulterated kindness, free from egoism and ignorance. The realisation of such a personality is the highest ideal of Buddhism. Such a man is called an Arahat.

The Buddhist outlook is very much in conformity with the spirit of modern age. The Buddha has stressed that the Dhamma must be सन्दिट्ठिको

or the truth of which should be able to be demonstrated before all. He has taught to keep our mind open and free from all bias, and to accept a thing not with a blind faith but with understanding based on critical examination and severe test. The Buddha has warned us not to bring faith in Him also blindly, but He has said—Just as a piece of gold is accepted as genuine after being rubbed on the stone, after being cut on the anvil and after being heated in the fire, so, before you accept what I say, you must put it to an examination as critical and severe as possible.

With an outlook as this, let all the religions come together and unite in conducting an exploration in the potentialities of the inner life with the spirit of a scientific quest, leaving aside all bias of sectarianism. Then and then only there may be a hope for religion to meet the challenge of modern materialism.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S GOSPEL OF DIVINE HUMANISM

RAMANI KUMAR DATTA GUPTA, B.L.
Calcutta

'Jiva is Shiva'

To visualise and serve living beings as God for the realisation of the Divinity in them is a new philosophy of work enunciated by Sri Ramakrishna, the great Master and preached by his illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishna fully realised that the suffering multitude he saw before him were but symbols of that Divinity, the realisation of which is the *summum bonum* of life and one who failed to pay due homage to those manifestations of the Divinity, worshipped God in other forms in vain. "Seekest thou God ?" says Sri Ramakrishna, "Then seek Him in man. Divinity is more manifest in man than in any other object." Sri Ramakrishna lived constantly on high spiritual planes in the serene fulness of cosmic joy. But he was not on that account unmindful of the infinite sufferings and afflictions of the world. He was wide awake to the tragic miseries and agonies of the unhappy world and did not detach himself from life to avoid its sufferings. His realisation of the identity of God and man, and his universal love revealed unto him that the living being is God and that whoever loves God must unite himself with Him in sufferings, errors and excesses of humanity. It was due to his monistic (Advaita) realisation that he screamed and smarted under pain, as from a wound, and his heart was bleeding at the sight of two boatmen quarrelling and one beating the other on the Ganges near his dwelling-place at Dakshineswar. Suffering of the boatman tortured him and he felt in the deep recess of his heart his pain as his own.

On another occasion Sri Ramakrishna burst into tears to see a man strike at a tree with an axe and cried out with agony: "My Mother is present in this tree, the axe is striking at Her." After his super-conscious state in the bosom of identity Sri Ramakrishna could not even place his feet on tender blades of grass, pluck flowers from plants, utter an unkind word to anyone and allow his feet to be touched by way of salutation—in a word, he realised and felt the very presence of Brahman in all and sundry—in men and women, beasts and birds, plants and insects. He not only relieved the individual sufferings of those who came to him for succour, but also removed collective sufferings on several occasions and exhorted Vivekananda and his other great disciples to serve the afflicted and the miserable as 'Shiva' or 'Narayana'. Specially on two occasions Sri Ramakrishna himself was extremely moved with compassion and sympathy, shed tears to see the wretched condition of famine-stricken people at Deoghar and Ranaghat and persuaded his caretaker and disciple Mathuranath Biswas, son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, to feed and clothe them adequately, and even to exempt the tenants from payment of taxes for a period of time because of famine prevailing in his estate.

One day at Dakshineswar Sri Ramakrishna took part in a talk amongst his disciples about 'compassion to living beings' (*jive daya*), a popular Vaishnavite maxim and at once uttered forth in a half-superconscious mood this aphoristic saying: *Jiva* is *Shiva* (a living being is God). Why kindness to living beings ? Worship them as God. Kindness stimulates arrogant superiority. Man has a right only to serve and worship as God.

This pithy spiritual truth, pregnant with a deep meaning, was quickly grasped, assimilated and realised by Swami Vivekananda, who interpreted and preached his Master's gospel of service by way of giving secular education to illiterate masses, spiritual knowledge to those who thirst for God, food and clothings to starving people, medical aid to diseased persons, and other kinds of succour to the needy and the afflicted, so that having all their wants fulfilled they might by and by be led to the domain of spirituality. The many-sided works of service rendered by the Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad according to local needs derive their inspiration from this aphoristic saying of Sri Ramakrishna: '*Jiva* is *Shiva*'.

Radiator of Peace and Unity

During Sri Ramakrishna's last illness at the Cossipore Garden House, Swami Vivekananda often implored his Master to transmit unto him such spiritual dynamism as might enable him to be constantly attuned to and deeply absorbed in the ineffable bliss of the Absolute in the highest superconscious realisation (*Nirvikalpa Samadhi*). Sri Ramakrishna chastised Swami Vivekananda for his narrow and selfish idea and exhorted him to dedicate his life to the service of humanity as God in their tragic miseries and afflictions. The Master assured his worthy disciple that the highest superconscious realisation would become so easy and natural to him by the grace of the Mother that even in his normal state he would be able to realise one Divinity in all beings. "Thou art the bearer," emphasised Sri Ramakrishna, "in this storm-tossed world, of the message of universal love, sympathy, joy and fraternity. It is thy sacred role, proud privilege and bounden duty to radiate peace, order and unity in the whirlpool of dissensions and wrangles into which people have feverishly thrown themselves. Be thou like the wide-spreading banyan tree in whose cool and soothing shade thousands of souls, weary and wounded in the struggle for existence, come for shelter, healing, solace and peace. The great mission of liberating people from all kinds of bondage and sufferings devolves on thee."

And the worthy apostle proved equal to the task. Vivekananda preached his Master's universal gospel of divine humanism, which has given an entirely new orientation to the scientific method of organised beneficence obtaining in the West as also to the hitherto-prevailing idea of compassion for the afflicted in the East, and has also given a quietus to the age-long conflict between spiritual life and social welfare. "From the highest Brahman to the tiniest atom," declared Swami Vivekananda, "abides the same God. Dedicate thyself to their service. God exists in varied forms before thee. Where dost thou seek Him ? He serveth God best, who loveth best His creatures."

Conception of Divine Humanism

In India the conception of Divinity in living beings is as old as the age of the Vedas. The Vedic seers realised the Absolute in the highest superconscious state and visualised Him in and through all. The Upanishads declare emphatically that one Supreme Brahman pervades the whole universe and is the sum-total of all souls. The Gita, the Bhagavatam, the Puranas, the Epics and the Vaishnava Scriptures sing equally of the noblest conception of an all-pervading Brahman. But the tragedy of things is that no serious attempt has been made by the people to translate this sublime doctrine into practical life. There has been an age-long conflict between theory and practice. The result is that the highest teachings of the Vedanta are out of touch with the practical life of the nation.

Blind, lame, dumb, diseased, miserable and poor people are there in all societies, in all climes and in all ages. People are also rendered helpless and distressed by such natural calamities as famine, pestilence, flood, earthquake, cyclone, fire, etc., and also by destructive weapons of modern warfare and frenzied mob-violence. Except a few believers in fatalism and inexorable Law of Nature, who are callous enough to leave the afflicted and the miserable to their fate to reap the consequences of their own misdeeds, people in general have natural sympathy and love for the distressed and feel inclined to alleviate their sufferings in all possible ways. All books on religion and ethics of the world inculcate kindness, sympathy, love and charity for relieving the distress of fellow-beings. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Jainism also stress the need of bestowing charity on the afflicted and relieving their sufferings, and regard compassion as an act of supreme virtue.

In India all schools of thought—dualistic, non-dualistic and qualified non-dualistic—appear to concur in the utility of the service to the suffering humanity from different angles of vision and attitudes. The dualists are not disposed to look upon living beings as God, but they serve them knowing that the Lord abides in them and that He will be pleased if His children are lovingly served. Qualified non-dualists maintain that the universe is the manifestation of God and that to serve manifested beings is tantamount to divine worship. Non-dualists (Advaitists) hold that a living being is Brahman Himself and that to serve a living being is to serve and worship Brahman and to realise Brahman in him. It is on this non-dualistic conception that Sri Ramakrishna, the great Teacher, built up his universal gospel of divine humanism, and Vivekananda, the great interpreter, preached this new philosophy of work broadened and strengthened by his intimate knowledge of the East and the West. The idealist and realist Vivekananda with an intellectuality and foresight that were his own, realised the supreme necessity of ministering to the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual needs of suffering humanity by initiating wide-scale organised works of service to be done in the true spirit of worship as an efficacious means to self-realisation. The large-hearted Vivekananda declared: "Are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak our gods ? Worship them first. He who sees Shiva in them really worships Shiva and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is preliminary. May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God that I believe in, the sum-total of all souls, and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races and of all species is the special object of my worship."

Service is Worship

The great religious and philanthropic institution, the Ramakrishna Mission of world-wide repute, founded by Swami Vivekananda, is catering to the needs of suffering humanity by secular education, spiritual knowledge, medical aid and varied relief works. A synthesis of these humanitarian works is essential for the constitution of man, for the gradual process of self-unfoldment from physical nourishment to the succour of the spirit. It is a privilege to help others. We must not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in our hand and say: 'Here, my poor man,' but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by giving a gift to him we are able to help ourselves. We must think ourselves blessed for the privilege given to us of working for God, and not of helping Him, Who comes in the forms of the poor, the miserable and the afflicted. The service of the distressed does not only assist the sufferers in the mitigation of their sufferings but also helps their servers even more effectively in the realisation of the Self. The giver is always the recipient. If service is rendered in the true spirit of worship, it is the most efficacious means to spiritual realisation, for man is the highest symbol of God and the service of man is the highest form of worship on earth. Herein lies the special significance of the ideal of divine humanism enjoined by Swami Vivekananda. This universal gospel of service embodies the future hopes and aspiration of mankind and represents in a remarkable degree the harmonious blending of knowledge, work and worship (love). It is Vedanta in its application to practical life and is a distinct and unique contribution to world-culture. The highest Vedantic truths that are treasured up in the Scriptures, cloisters, hermitages and mountain-caves, have been brought down for their application to practical life.

One question may be asked: Is it possible for ordinary mortals to serve suffering humanity in the true spirit of worship without first realising the inherent divinity in them ? It is true that he who has seen God will live for all and that without the realisation of the Spirit within oneself and in others, real service is not possible. But that must not deter us from practising the ideal. Before self-realisation we ought to keep constantly in view the revelation of the Scriptures and the spiritual experiences of the great seers who have realised the Truth, and try to follow them as best as we can. Constant practice in the spirit of worship will enable the server to realise the Self in the long run. This point was also elucidated by Swami Shivananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, in a letter to Romain Rolland, the great French savant.

India's Rôle as Peace-maker

The two devastating World Wars have left terribly baneful anarchy in thought and life in their trail, and the combatant nations have got weary of slaughter and havoc, and are thirsting for peace. It is high time that the work of evangelising the war-worn West and East with the soothing and life-giving message of the Vedanta should be pushed forward on an extensive and intensive scale. It is the Indian Vedanta that is the sovereign panacea for all ills and shall bring succour and abiding peace to the aggressive nations that are once again on war-path and stage tests of destructive explosives threatening wholesale annihilation with atomic and other offensive weapons, and deliberately refuse to believe in the efficacy of spiritual power and adhere to brute-force to achieve their objectives. A great opportunity has now come to India, because she has at last shaken off her age-long shackles of political thraldom and is, therefore, in an unfettered position to fulfil her foreign policy,—her spiritual mission, in the fullest possible measure. She must assert herself now and occupy her rightful place as the Spiritual Teacher and Peace-maker to the benighted world.

HINDUISM

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Hinduism as a religion is both a way of thinking and a way of living. It includes both a theory of the world and a code of life, that is to say, it is a code of life with a philosophical background. It was not founded by any prophet or incarnation of God. Nor is it based on the teachings of any one saint or religious reformer. It is based on the varied religious and spiritual experiences and teachings of many Indian sages and saints, seers and philosophers, as these have been recorded in the Vedas and Upaniṣads, the Smṛtis and Purāṇas, the Itihāsas or Epics including the Bhagavadgītā, and the Darśanas or philosophical systems. But Hinduism is primarily based on the Vedas which are not the works of any man, but are eternal, being the embodiment of eternal truths revealed to the ancient Hindu seers (ṛṣis). As such, Hinduism is also called Vaidika religion and Sanātana or eternal religion.

The Conception of God

Hinduism believes in one ultimate spiritual reality or universal spirit who is self-luminous and manifests himself in many worlds and dwells in all living beings as their inner ruler or guide. This ultimate reality is the supreme God in Hinduism. It also believes that though God is one, He has various manifestations in many gods and goddesses, any one of which may be worshipped as a form of the Supreme God. We have, therefore, in Hinduism various forms of the worship of God, ranging from the worship of images to the contemplation of Brahman. It believes rather in the unity of the gods in God, than the denial of gods for God. It finds One in all and all in One, and recognises the unity and harmony of all religious faiths as being so many paths to the same goal, i.e. God. Hinduism also holds that God can and does incarnate Himself in the world. When the moral exigency of the world requires it, God comes down to the world as a human being to save mankind and restore the moral order of the world.

The Conception of the World

The world, according to Hinduism, is created, maintained and destroyed by God. God's activity of creation, maintenance and destruction of this and many other worlds is a free play of His free will which is of the nature of sportive activity (līlā). The world is a moral stage on which individual souls have to play their parts and enjoy or suffer in life according to their merits or demerits. The cycle of alternate creation and destruction of the world (kalpa) has no beginning or end, it goes on for ever. The world and all things of the world, excepting souls, are impermanent. They have neither eternal reality nor absolute value; God alone is the eternal reality and absolute good.

The Conception of the Self, Bondage and Liberation

The individual soul is a conscious subject which is different and distinct from the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. It is a part of God or identical with God and, therefore, uncreated, eternal, pure and free. But when through the influence of Māyā or avidyā, i.e. ignorance and egoism, it forgets its real nature and identifies itself with the mind-body, it becomes subject to bondage. Bondage means the liability of the soul to birth and death and consequent suffering in the world. In the state of bondage all souls are governed by the law of *karma* and rebirth. We are born in the world to reap the fruits of our actions in the past life, and we shall be born again to reap the fruits of our actions in the present life. For every individual, soul, the cycle of birth and death will go on repeating itself till it is liberated from bondage.

The law of *karma* does not imply fatalism as it is ordinarily supposed. It rather means self-determination. It just states that one's present condition of life is partially determined by one's past actions, and one's future will be determined by one's present actions. In the Yoga Vāśiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa, we are told that fate (daiva) is the cumulative effect of the actions of a man done in the past life (pūrva-janmārjitaṁ karma daivamityucyate).

As ignorance about the real nature of the self, God and the world is the root cause of bondage, right knowledge of them (tattvajñāna) is regarded as the indispensable condition of liberation. Liberation means freedom from sin, suffering and rebirth, and the attainment of perfect peace and happiness. It may be attained in this life or after death.

There is, however, some difference of opinion among the Hindu religious thinkers as to the exact nature of the right knowledge of reality that is to liberate man from bondage to the world. This is due to the difference in their conceptions of reality itself. Thus the Hindu scriptures come to lay down four main paths of liberation. These are called rājayoga or the path of psychic control and concentration, karma-yoga or the path of disinterested work, bhakti-yoga or the path of devotion to God, and jñāna-yoga or the path of philosophic knowledge of reality. But there it should be observed that these paths are not exclusive of and opposed to one another, rather they are complementary.

The Hindu Social System

Hinduism commends Varṇāśrama-dharma as the ideal social system. It recognises four natural ends of man's life, namely, kāma or enjoyment, artha or wealth, dharma or righteous work, and mokṣa or liberation. It is, therefore, wrong to think that Hinduism is a religion of world-negation and that it would make its followers quite other-worldly and apathetic to life in this world. Far from this, it recognises wealth and enjoyment as natural ends which one should try to realise in life. Only one should not be lost in them, but should make them the means for the attainment of higher moral and spiritual values, namely, virtue and liberation. Liberation means not only freedom from suffering, but the attainment of bliss (ānanda)—infinite and eternal. That all men in the world want to be free from suffering and have joy for ever will be admitted by all of us. But in order that we can attain this end, we should so regulate our life, that the pursuit of the other ends like wealth and enjoyment does not hamper but help us realise the highest end of liberation which is eternal joy or bliss. Varṇāśrama-dharma as a socio-religious system gives us the rules for such a regulated life. In it there is a division of society into the four classes (not castes) of Brāhmaṇas (spiritual teachers), Kṣatriyas (warriors), Vaiśyas (traders) and Śūdras (labourers), according to the natural endowments and professions (guṇa and karma) of its individual members. There is also a division of the individual's life into the four stages of brahmacarya or student life, gārhasthya or family life, vānaprastha or retired life and sannyāsa or world-renunciation. Any person who performs the duties of life according to Varṇāśrama-dharma will attain liberation, whichever the class he or she may belong to in the social body. The order of *varṇa* and *āśrama* was quite flexible in the past. But later on it degenerated into a rigid caste system in which the spirit was lost and the form alone ruled over society. In recent times a process of reform and reconstruction of the social system in Hinduism has been started to adapt it to the modern conditions of life.

Cardinal Virtues in Hinduism

Hinduism recognises and enjoins all members of the society to acquire certain cardinal virtues. These are: truthfulness, simplicity, purity, continence, self-control, abstinence from illegitimate injury to any life (ahiṁsā), discrimination, detachment, fortitude, study of the scriptures, worship of God and service to all living beings.

Ideals of Spirituality and Renunciation in Hinduism

What distinguish Hinduism in the comity of religions are its noble ideals of spirituality and renunciation. For it, the reality of man and the world is the infinite, eternal spirit. Man is the immortal self and not the mortal mind-body. His soul nothing can destroy. Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot moisten it, air cannot dry it. It is eternal, all-pervading, unmoved, immovable and everlasting. Hinduism calls upon one and all to hear about this transcendent self, meditate on it day and night, know it, realise it, and be free and fearless in life. This is what Hinduism teaches. This is the central teaching of the Upaniṣads. This is the main pivot on which Swāmī Vivekānanda's life, activity and teachings turned throughout his earthly career.

For a true Hindu, religion is not so much a matter of forms and formalities, external rites and ceremonies, as of a direct experience of the presence of God within him and outside him. The final end of his religious life is to have a vision of God, to see God face to face, and not to remain satisfied with anything less. So also the acid tests of a man's moral and spiritual life are detachment from worldly things, renunciation of worldly values, capacity for self-sacrifice for the good of others, love and sympathy for suffering beings and selfless service to them without distinction of caste, colour, creed, community and nationality. It is no doubt difficult, but not impossible, to realise these ideals, as has been evidenced by the lives of some rare blessed souls like Jesus Christ, Gautama Buddha, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, Śrī Rāmakrishṇa and Swāmī Vivekānanda. Hinduism has a special mission to perform in the world. It has to preach these noble ideals to mankind. So long as it embodies and cherishes these ideals, it will live, no matter whatever its other faults and failings may be. Let all Hindus try to uphold these great ideals, live them and thereby achieve their own good and contribute to the good of mankind.

Om Tat Sat

UNIVERSAL RELIGION AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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According to the man in the street, the expression "Universal Religion" brings forth a variety of images, namely, that of a bouquet in which various kinds of flowers have been studded or a delicacy in which edible matters of different varieties have been put together or a necklace in which pearls have been collected from different sources. In other words, by "Universal Religion" is meant a synthesis of the best elements of the different religious systems like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. The purpose of this paper is to show that this is an erroneous notion. Universal Religion is neither the product of ratiocination or discursive understanding nor an amalgam of the vital elements of different religions produced eclectically. For one thing, the universal kept apart from the particulars, is a meaningless abstraction. Universals do not hang in the air but find their meaning and significance in and through the particulars.

Attempts to arrive at a systematic conception of Universal Religion through discursive understanding failed in the past and are bound to fail in the future also. I shall take two instances from history to illustrate the point. Akbar's attempt to establish a Universal Religion acceptable to everybody (Din-i-Ilahi) did not succeed as it was based on unsound reasoning. It is true indeed, that the great Emperor studied with remarkable devotion and sincerity the scriptures of the Hindus, of the Christians, of the Jains and others but failed to notice the basic unity underlying all religious systems. In his over-zealousness, he betrayed an unfair preference of one religious faith to another and earned condemnation from Vincent Smith who ventured to say that The Divine Faith was a monument of Akbar's folly, not of his wisdom. With a view to acquiring a comprehensive account of Christianity, Akbar invited Christian missionaries from Goa, studied the scriptural texts under their guidance, said his prayers in the chapel and even encouraged the missionaries to convert Hindus and Moslems to Christianity. It is said that Hinduism exercised a deeper influence on the mind of Akbar than any other religion and he adopted the Hindu way of life and took active part in many great Hindu festivals. Jehangir states in his autobiography that his father never for a moment forgot God. Akbar used to say that even when engaged in ordinary duties of the world one should have constant thought of God. One can be god-intoxicated and yet remain in the world. The Emperor used to illustrate his point by referring his audience to the behaviour of the Indian women who would have upon their heads pitchers full of water, laugh and joke among themselves and yet would not allow a drop of water to fall. This will remind you all of a similar illustration given in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. History shows that the Universal Religion propounded by Akbar did not survive and the followers of this path, whose number was not large, failed to ascertain, after Akbar's death, how exactly the Universal Religion could be made dynamic and fruitful in everybody's life.

Hegel and his right-wing followers endeavoured to establish a Universal Religion on the basis of certain fundamentals which follow from the fact of man's consciousness of his own finitude or limitation. It has been said that in order to be fully conscious of his own finitude or limitation a man must transcend his finitude and this inevitably leads one to the awareness of the Absolute which is the ground of all that is. In other words, to be conscious of change as change one must be changeless. When, for instance, I go to a film show and see the movie pictures in quick succession, I as a cogniser do not change, for, had the "I" also changed corresponding to the change in the pictures, my awareness of change would not have been possible. Hegel did not have much difficulty in disproving the contention of his opponent that all human knowledge being relative, it is impossible for us to know God or the Absolute. Hegel's reply is that the assertion that we know phenomena only would be meaningless except by an implicit reference to the Infinite. If we knew finite things only it would have been impossible for us to characterise them as finite. The knowledge of a limit involves the transcendence of it. Now, this awareness of a limit and its transcendence are present in every human being.

Therefore religious consciousness is universal. The Hegelian conception of Universal Religion was repudiated by the Pragmatists and the Intuitionists because it lay too much emphasis on man's intellect alone to the utter neglect of his feeling and will. Religion is man's total reaction to reality and if it fails to satisfy man's thought, emotion and volition in the appropriate manner, it degenerates into meaningless practices and rituals. Hegel's panlogism which is at once a source of strength and weakness of the Hegelian Philosophy did not inspire the religious aspirant, for the Absolute of Hegel which is to be reached through the help of logical categories is like a dark night in which all cows are black. It is a pity that the logical category of identity-in-difference which is Hegel's chief contribution to Logic was not fully utilised by Hegel in dealing with the religious phenomenon. Had Hegel been fully conscious of the lessons of his own logic he would have certainly grasped that the plan of the Universe is identity in difference or unity in diversity and Universal religion cannot therefore be a substitute for dead uniformity in which all individual differences are obliterated.

It has sometimes been held that the greatest obstacle that prevents us from realizing the ideals of Universal Religion is the radical difference that exists between two religions in regard to their philosophy, mythology and rituals. It seems to me that the differences in this respect are sometimes overdrawn. It is true indeed that a particular religion is rooted in certain traditions, in a philosophy, in mythologies and expressed through certain rituals. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to discover broad principles which are common to all the different religions of the world. It may be said without any fear of contradiction that in spite of differences in the philosophies that underlie the major religions of the world viz, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and others, all agree in one broad principle, *a contingentia mundi*, because the contingent is not, the necessary Being is. In other words, the relative or the contingent is not self-explanatory. That is the main philosophical theme of all major religions. Some Western scholars point out that there cannot be any point of agreement between Hinduism and Buddhism, for while the former is polytheistic the latter is non-theistic. This seems to be a case of over-simplification. Polytheism is not the appropriate term to characterise Hinduism, for the Hindu does not really worship many Gods but simply envisages God in many forms. Max Müller invented the term, 'henotheism' to indicate worship of one God in many forms of which only one is worshipped at a time. As we have in the Rig Veda: "There is one but they call Him by many names".

Much harm has been done by wrong interpretations put on the Bauddha doctrines of Anattā and Nibbāna. Buddhism is not materialism nor an offshoot of Logical Positivism or modern Psychology which discovers no soul, no 'ghost in the machine' beyond individual psychoses. Something that can say "I" does remain and that is the State of Enlightenment. The precise nature of this Enlightenment was not discussed by Buddha for obvious reasons. He refrained from describing the Indescribable. Nibbāna and Anattā are correlated concepts. Nibbāna is not a blank or void but the result of the cessation of craving. The Pāli word *Nibbāna* is derived from the negative particle *Ni* and *Vāna* which means selfish desire. The Sanskrit word *Nirvāṇa* means 'blowing out,' that is to say, the blowing out of the flame of personal desire. It is a matter of great significance that in Buddhistic religion *Śīla* and *Prajñā*, good conduct and intuitive insight are inseparably united. Whatever may be the value of the method adopted by the Buddha to popularise religion, to look upon religion as a way of life, one thing is certain: the Buddha was convinced that religion has its roots in the deepest inward life of man. When the Buddha announced that his death was fast approaching, Ānanda sought instruction from him as regards the Order, whereupon the Buddha said: Ānanda, be lamps unto yourselves. Be a refuge to yourselves. Seek no outer refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp and refuge". One can notice clearly how the Vedāntic Aparokshānubhūti compares with the view of Truth as a lamp and a refuge.

Christ's sayings 'I and my Father are one', 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', might have developed an Advaitic viewpoint if the rationale could be discovered. And the same conclusion might be deduced if we know how to separate the husk from the kernel so far as Islam is concerned. Consider, for instance, the following verse of the Koran (25 : 63) : And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness and when the ignorant address them, they say peace.

I do not for a moment suggest that a mere discovery of certain points of agreement or similarity of attitude between one religion and another would lead us to Universal Religion. All that I wish to submit is that toleration must necessarily lead to acceptance and for this the followers of different religious paths must develop a mutual understanding which results in what may be called a confluence of selves.

Vivekānanda was perfectly certain that a standard Universal Religion was an impossibility since Unity in diversity is the plan of the Universe. He never wanted a Hindu to be converted into Christianity or a Moslem to be a Bauddha. One must stick to one's own religion and yet feel the underlying bond of unity among all religions. The bond of unity is spiritual, it is timeless, deathless. It is pure consciousness, the Advaitin rightly asserts.

Śaṁkara rightly asserts that consciousness cannot be divided into moments, since all divisions are rendered intelligible only with reference to consciousness. The fact that we can know temporal determination points unmistakably to the truth that we are children of eternity.

Consciousness is in fact distinctionless. Still it appears to be divided owing to the limiting adjuncts such as mind and so on, just as ether appears divided by its connexion with jars and the like. If, as Śaṁkara rightly urges, the self or consciousness changes with change in ideas there would not be consciousness of the series as a unity. The serial unity is, therefore, entirely different from, and points to, an unchanging conscious principle at the background in which there is no plurality. It follows, clearly, that man, in so far as he knows history, cannot be identical with history. The knowledge of a changing reality cannot be possible for a being who is nothing more than a part of the changing reality. In other words, consciousness of change precludes the possibility of change in consciousness.

That consciousness is an unchanging witness is proved by the fact of dreamless sleep. It is but common knowledge that dream-experience and waking experience are fundamentally different. We fail to ascertain the beginning or end of both waking and dream states, for both seem to be uncaused. A cause can connect one event with another belonging to the same time-order and the cause of a state should have to be in the same order as that state, so that any attempt to transcend that state in order to discover the cause thereof would be meaningless. When we compare waking state with dream the soul assumes the position of a witness of the two and no change can be allowed in the witness. Dream is a rival state as real as waking. The two are independent of each other and both have claim to a reality of their own. If it is objected that waking consciousness is never stultified, whereas a dream is, the reply will be that as waking consciousness cannot be stultified so long as it continues, so dream is not stultified so long as it is dream. It follows that there is no interval of time between dream and waking although there seems to be such an interval. Strictly speaking, we have there a timeless witness—consciousness. If a time interval is supposed, it would connect dream and waking and would make the two a single continuous stage. But experience does not testify to the continuity between dream-life and waking-life. In fact, waking time is confined to waking and stops with it, dream-time is coeval with dream. The interval between the two is metaphysical. It is pure consciousness which shines in dreamless sleep and witnesses both the dream-experience and waking experience. Thus consciousness cannot be subject to change because it is witness of change.

It may be argued that such spiritual illumination is given to a few seers only. What happens to the common man who wishes to know the bond of unity on a plane other than the metaphysical ? It may be stated in reply that in our everyday life we get a glimpse of the timeless, as for example, when we listen to a song in rapt attention or witness a landscape and appraise its aesthetic value. It is not the individual ego which evaluates the beauty of a landscape or transmits itself in a melodious musical performance, but the deeper spirit which transcends the mind-body complex and yet permeates it. What is true of the individual is also true of the Universal. The Universal, as already pointed out, must find its abode in the particular. We have it in one of the verses of the Īsha Upanishad: Those who are devoted entirely to the principle of indiscriminate Unity and seek to put away from them the integrality of Brahman, also put away from them knowledge and completeness and enter, as it were, into a greater darkness. Enlightenment comes when one realizes one's identity with the Universal Self who is both above and below.

As Vivekānanda put it, the aspirant progresses from lesser truth to greater truth, from dim light to brighter light. "Man has to become divine by realizing the divine; idols or temples or churches or books are only the supports, the helps of his spiritual childhood: but on and on he must progress." The question is how, in what precise manner should man progress. Rituals of different religions which appear to be mutually antagonistic may help us in the matter if we proceed with sympathy and devotion.

Religious signs or symbols are voluntarily chosen and although they are material in some cases, they imply a spiritual meaning and significance. Consider the different physical postures like bowing, kneeling, folding the palms, touching the ears, saluting etc. or take such rites as burning incense or light, sacrifice, oblation, ablution etc. We accept temples, mosques, churches, certain rivers, crosses as sacred not because what they are in themselves but because they are symbols possessing spiritual meaning. The goal of Universal Religion can be reached only by realizing that the different religions are expressions of one basic truth, viz. the spirit's self-discovery by gradual withdrawal from the non-self. "Religion is realization, not talk nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes."

It is possible for man to realize this end, for man is potentially divine. The attitude of the aspirant must be scientific, that is to say, he must cultivate humility and reverence and should not look upon any particular religion as the expression of the final truth. As Swami Vivekānanda puts it: "If there is ever to be a Universal Religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God it will preach and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brāhminic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite scope for development. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance, which will recognise diversity in every man and woman and whose whole scope, whose whole force will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature."

This precisely is the goal of Universal Religion. It does not aim at destroying one's religion so as to achieve a common standard. It aims at giving man a lift from where he is. "Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life; think of it; dream of it; live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body be full of that idea and just leave every other idea alone. That is the way to success and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced." (C.W.I-177).

Universal Religion, then, is not a motley of diverse faiths. It is the recognition of the basic truth of all religious systems of the world. This central truth has been recognised by the scientists of today. Heisenberg says: "There is a higher power, not influenced by our wishes, which finally decides and judges. People have used different words at different times for this central power. They called it spirit or God. There are many ways to this center, even today, and science is only one of them."

I do not quote Heisenberg with a view to lending additional support to the view set forth here. All that I wish to emphasise is that science and spirituality are not poles asunder. Nor does our journey to the Universal Religion lead us to an ocean without a shore or a shadow play without a plot. Let us remind ourselves of the message of hope given by the Swami:

"When there will grow a link of sympathy and regard between both nations by this give-and-take intercourse, there will be then no need for these noisy cries. They will do everything of their own accord. I believe that by this cultivation of religion and the wider diffusion of the Vedānta, both this country and the West will gain enormously. To me the pursuit of politics is a secondary means in comparison with this. I will lay down my life to carry out this belief practically."

To sum up: the ideal of Universal Religion is not an unattainable ideal. We shall however fail to achieve the end if we concentrate on ratiocination only. Let emotional responsiveness and a strong determination be our guide: I am sure the goal is not a far-off divine event.

CHAPTER VI

NATIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH RELIGION

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The wording of this subject 'National Integration through Religion' is open to the charge that it seems to regard religion not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. While this meaning is not meant to be conveyed by the title, no one can object to the instrumental value of religion as one of its essential values. One of the defects of Indian life is that religion is not sufficiently integrated into life. It is true that practically all that an Indian does is related to some religious teaching or practice of the country. Yet religion is not vitally related to the social, economic, civic, political and international life of man.

No one can gainsay the fact that national integration is one of the most vexing problems of present-day India. People do not feel drawn towards each other in the same intimate way as they feel drawn together within a family circle. Differences of caste, creed, community, religion, language, and region more often than not drive Indians apart. If the country is to progress at all, it is necessary that these differences should be subordinated to the larger national good. The Government has appointed committees on emotional integration and national integration, but the fruits of their labours are not too plentiful. The major problem of India continues to be how to unite the people of India together, and once united how to keep them united.

Anyone who sees the value of religion will readily concede that both personal religion and corporate religion can do a great deal to promote and sustain national integration. But there are certain conditions to be fulfilled if this desired end is to be reached.

1. In the mental field, religion must try to give an intelligent and intelligible meaning to our religious beliefs and convictions. This does not necessarily mean that every religious tenet should be capable of logical proof. There are many facts of life that defy logic. Yet a religion which is irrational and superstitious cannot hold the minds of thoughtful people very long. Those who understand the inner meaning of both religion and science would say that religious truths may at times be supra-rational, but not irrational. In the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, faith does not contradict reason, but complements it. Faith is an extension of reason. It would look

as though reason tells a seeker: "You and I have kept company together all these years; and I have led you up to a point. But now I see a chasm before me which I am unable to cross. I, therefore, hand you over to a reliable guide who can do it for you, and his name is Faith."

What is even more important than giving an intelligent and intelligible meaning to our religious beliefs and convictions is giving such a meaning to the beliefs and convictions of others. This means that we have to be catholic in our outlook and learn to look at things from another's point of view. Thus even idol worship which may appear abhorrent to those who are not used to it may have an intelligible meaning to those who practise it. One who attaches strong emotions to the conception of the kingdom of God can understand how another may attach similar emotions to the conception of Ram Rajya. Even the idea of an Islamic society which seems to suggest narrowness and exclusiveness to Non-Muslims may be only a synonym for a good society. The various Scriptures of the world may be as sacred to their respective followers as the Bible is to the Christians.

If we are to give an intelligent and intelligible meaning to the beliefs and convictions of others, we must emphasize what is essential in one's faith, and not play up the odd and the trivial. Those who only look for curios and museum pieces in the religious experiences of others can never get to their heart. If one is to be fair all around, one must bring to one's task assiduous study and a spirit of exploration.

2. When we move to the psychological field, it is well to remember that religion does not mean mere beliefs and convictions. It deeply involves man's emotions and feelings. Religion represents "the expulsive power of a great affection." If religion is to be an abiding factor in life, it must bring man's emotions and feelings under captivity to great ideas and ideals. Religion must stir a man to noble action, such as a deep love and attachment for the country which gave him birth. He should project himself into the whole of India. If one's religion, one's community, one's language, and one's region have a claim upon a person's loyalty, so has one's country. The mountains and rivers, the valleys and plains, the flora and fauna of India all have a claim upon one's loyalty; and a religion worth having must take this truth into account.

The great love and patriotism that the late President Kennedy, who was a Roman Catholic, had for his country is an illustration in point. No one has a right to assume that a person who does not belong to his own religion in India is less than a 100 per cent Indian.

In the psychological field, again, a person's religion must keep pace with the different phases in his emotional growth and development. For example, when a person is young he may interpret his religion in terms of angels and archangels; but when he grows up he needs to have more mature ways of expressing his religious experience in such terms as the beauty of holiness. A mature person desires to live the good life not because he wants to go to heaven and avoid hell or because he wants to win the appreciation of his fellowmen and shun their disapprobation, but because it is good to be good. As St. Paul puts it: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11).

3. If religion is to be a factor in the national integration of a country, and even otherwise, it should be interpreted as an instrument for the social unification of the country. The constitution of India lays down that in the country there is to be no distinction of race, religion, language or sex. It is the business of the religions of India to convert this declaration into a living reality. The abolition of untouchability and the provision for temple entry should become actual facts if we are to command the respect of the outside world. Sooner or later, the whole of the Indian community must become intermarriageable if we are to survive as a nation and pull our weight in the world. Whatever merits caste might have had in the past, it has outlived its usefulness. Adapting the words of Robert Burns to the present context, it may be said:

> "Race (or caste) is but the guinea stamp. Man is the gold for all that."

Unfortunately for India today to the extent to which caste is declining as a social factor, it is rivetting itself as a political factor.

If religion is to be true to itself, it must stress the worth and dignity of human personality. Fundamental rights must be extended to all merely because they are human beings. It ought to be the teaching of all religions that every human being is of inestimable value in the sight of God.

If human brotherhood is to become a reality, stress must be laid on the doctrine of the Mean, particularly in the realm of material goods. It is a pity that the ideal of non-attachment long cherished in India is respected today more in its breach than in its observance. Greed and avarice are found everywhere. A truly religious-minded man should avoid extreme poverty as well as excessive riches. One should be satisfied with what is necessary for food, clothing, shelter, education, leisure and opportunity for travel and culture. Wealth is a trust; and every man should regard himself as a born trustee (L. P. Jacks). The Upanishad is right when it says: "Renounce the world; take it back as a gift from God; never covet it." It is no wonder that this teaching had a profound influence on the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi.

In the social field, again, it is imperative that the religions operating in India should promote in the rank and file of people a strong civic and social sense. It is a pity that while Indians generally may have a high code of individual or personal conduct, their social conduct leaves much to be desired. Consideration for the feelings and conveniences of others, respect for public property, regard for the rule of law, and discipline are all conspicuous by their relative absence. India will never become a great country unless this national deficiency is rectified.

4. In the economic field, if religion is to become a unifying factor, it is necessary that it should enable every person to live a life of productivity. Drones and social parasites have no *raison d'être* in any good society. There is room for a few to be completely lost in a life of meditation and contemplation, but it is obvious that it is not meant for everybody. Religious people should frown upon anyone who takes shelter behind religion for a life of inactivity. For the majority of people the desirable end is a proper balance between contemplation and activity. From childhood up, a person should be trained to give a hundred n.p. of service for every rupee received. It is both his religious and national duty. While we may not go so far as the late Prof. T. N. Carver in claiming that the value of a person equals his production minus his consumption, it is right to hold that no able-bodied person has a right to exist if he does not pull his own weight.

Every religion worthy of the name is equated with the 'ideal of service'. Jesus Christ claimed that he came into the world "to minister, and not to be ministered unto". He gave the highest possible place in society to the man who serves. Some one has rightly said that "service is the rent we pay for the place we occupy on earth".

5. In the field of moral edification, religion has an important role to play. No religion is worthy of man's respect which does not enable its followers to live the highest moral life. Religious and moral values should go together hand in hand. Any religion which falls short of the highest moral values that one can think of is an unworthy religion. Religion, true and undefiled, should inculcate not only such passive qualities as non-violence, non-attachment, simplicity of life and standards, and inner purity, but also such active qualities as downright honesty, truthfulness, manliness, courage, and co-operation. Our 'yes' must always mean 'yes' and 'no' 'no'. It is regrettable that while India has a high record in the realm of the passive qualities of character, its record in the active realm is not equally high.

6. Finally, in the spiritual field, any religion worth the name must make available to man a perennial source of supply which will enable a person to stand upright and act upright. In this connection, one must emphasize the ideas underlying such terms as the living Christ, the living Buddha and the living Krishna. If these manifestations of God are realities, they are living realities; and the world should not willingly let them die. To the earnest Christian, the spirit of Christ is as much of a reality as his own existence. Likewise is the living Buddha to the earnest Buddhist and the living Krishna to the Hindu. A man who has caught the real spirit of religion

will not allow success to turn his head nor defeat to push him into the depths of despondency. Heat and cold are matters of indifference to him.

Speaking somewhat negatively, if religion in India is to be a unifying factor, it should rise above mere rituals and ceremonies, creeds and dogmas. Yet much of the religion that one sees around oneself does not do that. Hence it is that some thoughtful people turn their backs on it. Religion must touch and transform everyday life for good. Anything short of that is a sham and mockery. It must adjust itself to both the old and the new needs of man. It has been rightly said that "even a religion cannot make a Standstill Agreement with History".

RELIGION AND POLITICS

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To speak of religion in this age of economics and science, of matter and reason, may sound anachronistic. It involves one into the risk of being called a revivalist or traditionalist and therefore reactionary. Our state system to-day has adopted as its policy, secularism or non-religiousness. In democracies, religion is personal, at best social; in Socialism or Communism, it is something whose complete elimination has removed many of the inequalities and barriers between man and man. In the process of exploitation of the weak by the strong, that characterised the history of the past, religion played not a little part, they would argue. Progress and advancement, strength and security, achievements and realisations—all these are and should be measured by the standard of efficiency that a nation has attained by the utilisation of the tremendous forces that science has been unravelling from the deep bosom of nature. Why should we then bring in the abstract and abstruse spirit of religion to disturb the course of this human life, which is worth living for its own sake ?

Arguments by citing examples of history are often made in order to discredit religion, which once shaped politics. In medieval times, Europe was Christendom, the Pope of Rome being the king of kings, the emperor of emperors. Man's credulity was then exploited by the church. There had been numerous struggles and strifes in the name of religion. They culminated in the Thirty Years' War between the two rival camps of Roman Catholics and Protestants; that war ravaged Germany. The dawn of reason and the birth of the nations synchronising with the coming of the modern age, unleashed new ideas of statecraft; Christianity and Papacy ceased to exert any influence on politics. The treaty of Westphalia in 1648 was the beginning of this age, when politics becomes diplomacy, when matter only matters, and religion is shifted to the background.

And Free India is likewise secular both in policy and action. Religious communalism ran its ugly course into our struggle for freedom from British rule. That resulted in vivisection of India. India, that is Bharat to-day, follows the west, while Pakistan, created out of old India, says that it is Islamic Democracy.

If religion is a mere dogma, if it degenerates into fanaticism, if religion is exclusive, if religion is taken as a justification for shirking the responsibilities of this life, if religion demoralises a man, it is good that the modern states have neutralised it; it is proper that crusades and zehads, religious wars and communal riots are discountenanced by the enlightened nations. Our problems of life are ever on the increase, the needs of this life and living are multifarious. Why should we make our problems still more complicated by invoking that religion ?

But the question still remains to be answered. What is religion ? Is there no religion which transcends sectarianism and dogmatism and fanaticism ? Is there no religion of man ? Should we take the perversion of religion as religion ? What is then sacrilege ? Swami Vivekananda, himself a man of religion, has condemned in his writings and speeches this so-called exploiting and aggressive religion in no uncertain terms. In his famous address at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, he said, "Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendant, fanaticism have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched often and often with human blood, destroyed civilizations and sent whole nations to despair." And Swamiji gave the clarion call to the West, to the East and to all posterity in the name of truth and religion and sang the song of perpetual inspiration to the ears of man—"Awake, arise, stop not till the goal is reached." What is that goal ?

Before any attempt to answer the above questions, let us look at the world of to-day, which is sharply divided into two or more rival ideological camps, indulging in cold war and military alliances and counter-alliances. The triumphant career of Europe began with its expansion through overseas commerce, all over the world. Mutual rivalries among the European nations assumed increasingly dreadful forms because scientific inventions were utilised in serving the cause of wars and battles. The East, that fell behind, became the fruitful area for their expansion and rivalry for supremacy. The war-lords became the arbiters of matters political, and human sufferings reached a stage inconceivable in that age when religion had its say in politics. The world has already witnessed two world wars, which brought in their train massacre of the innocents in millions and destruction of immeasurable national wealth. And this earth, so beautiful, so rich and so charming because of science, trembles from within at the prospect of a third armageddon, which in this atomic age would mean total destruction. Quo-Vadis ? This is the cry of the agonised soul. Right thinking men of all countries have been crying hoarse, warning the powerful nations against the race for amassing atomic weapons and other armaments, reminding them of the suicidal consequences of an atomic warfare that may come, unless this trend of world politics would change.

And those who count in world politics to-day also speak of peace and co-existence. But that peace is armed peace; that co-existence is a convenient phrase, signifying little. The teeming millions of this world are ill-at-ease, all the more. The United Nations Organisation is there; it brings the message of hope for the peace-loving and well-meaning men of the world. Its programme of action is well thought out and there have been unceasing efforts to remove fear and starvation, war and plague, in order to make this world safe and congenial for all to live in. But this hope dashes to the ground when events uncontrollable by the U.N., happen here and there,—events which are dangerously potential.

Even there are endeavours, not of course always insincere, towards frequent meetings and talks of disarmament, organised by big and powerful nations represented at stages by the graded V.I.P.'s. But the talks are all around the details. Mutual suspicion, at any rate, mental reservation pervades the whole atmosphere of these august meetings. No mental change is envisaged, no yearning for real good and welfare of humanity is there to overpower the political prestige of the nations that assemble. Reasoned arguments, talks about the prospects of equal distribution of the wealth of this earth, pious utterances for peace—all these characterise the diplomatic confabulations among the V.I.P.'s. But nothing tangible has yet come out, there has been as yet no change of heart. Head plays its role gloriously, but heart is starving. Consequently, the actions that follow run counter to these brilliant utterances.

Arnold J. Toynbee, the great philosopher-historian, has pertinently put a question in the context of this world-wide ferment and terrible uncertainty: "Was there any virtue in the religious toleration into which a disillusioned western world had subsided towards the close of the 17th century of the Christian Era ? How long would western souls find it bearable to go on living without religion ? And, now that the discomfort of a spiritual vacuum had tempted them to open the door to such devils as nationalism and fascism and communism, how long was their latter-day belief in toleration likely to stand the test?....Would an 18th century toleration hold its own against a 20th century fanaticism ?"

Toynbee apparently uses the word 'toleration' not in the etymological sense but in the historical sense. Under the garb of toleration, Europe subsided to non-religion and absolute indifference to the call of the soul. The 20th century fanaticism, which Toynbee refers to, has grown around ideologies that capture the imagination of the materially minded rationalists of to-day. This is far more dangerous than religious fanaticism, because this is armed and equipped with what modern science has given us. "Politicians to-day," Toynbee further says, "are wanderers in a western wilderness, astray from the one true God of their forefathers: to them parochial states occupy the position once occupied by the sectarian church." The great historian warns the west against the dangerous symptoms of complete break-down, total annihilation and unredeemed disintegration.

And there lies the malady. We have rationalised our material existence but have repudiated the eternal truth that man is not all flesh, he is also the soul. We have been trying to give to the flesh all that it demands; and we have allowed the inner man, the soul—to starve. The result is maldistribution, not only in the material sense, but also in the spiritual sense. Unless there is a feeling, an emotional consciousness that all are creatures of one Supreme Being, born with equal rights and duties and opportunities, how can real love for all grow ? Love is never strained, it is not a matter of reasoned argument, it is not something that grows and sustains itself by dry and involved dialectics. Love is a spontaneous manifestation of religion that is in us. The sincerity of our purpose is to be tested not by head alone, but by heart. One can deceive others but cannot deceive onseself.

And here comes religion to play its glorious role in politics. This religion is neither sectarian nor fanatical. It is the universal religion of man. The ethics and morals of all religions of the world are fundamentally the same. Faith in God, consciousness of the absolute, the belief in the unforeseeable forces that lie much above our dialectical reasonings, the bold assertion of the real values of life, the fearlessness to do what conscience dictates—all these go to form the core of all religions. Churches and temples and mosques, prayers and pujas and nemajes—they are necessary in social and community life, sometimes also in spiritual life. But they do not constitute religion, though they contribute to it. Let us rationalise religion and cure it from sectarianism and fanaticism and allow it to preside over our mundane existence. Let there be a balanced life, a life which does not ignore the material necessities as well as the spiritual necessities. Swami Vivekananda defines religion as "the manifestation of the divinity already in man". There can be no better definition of the religion we are pleading for. If that divinity manifests itself in our daily pursuits, if religion is really *dharma* that sustains our existence, the divergence between profession and practice would be eliminated. The maldistribution will be removed, the selfishness would be enlarged into the broad enlightened self, duplicity and cunning would yield place to courage and straightforwardness. The unending blessings that science brings for us, will be meaningful when for their proper utilisation we shall have the conscience and the spirit of accommodation which lie in the bosom of religion. In our upanishads, there are numerous sayings of great significance: "*Bhumaiba sukham, nalpey sukhamasti—tena tyaktena bhunjithaḥ, ma gridhaḥ kasyachid dhanam—Atmanam biddhi—charaibeti, charaibeti.*" There is happiness in comprehensiveness and in a spirit of accommodation, there is none in narrowness and selfishness.—One who knows how to sacrifice, can only enjoy. It is a sin to feel tempted by others' wealth.—Know thyself.—Go on, go on through the path of progress.

These are some of the tenets of universal religion, the religion of man.

And its cradle is India. Swamiji said at Chicago in 1893, "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and of all nations of the earth."

Yes, India is the land of religion, its national genius is *dharma*, not a religious opinion or creed but that religion which is a synthetic whole embracing all diversities. Those who make materialistic or economic interpretation of history may rule it out as nonsense. But still it is true, true as the sun rises in the east. Swami Vivekananda in his famous article, 'The Historical Evolution of India' has made an admirably analytical study of this national genius of India, and has remarked, "we have seen throughout the history of India that a spiritual upheaval is almost always succeeded by a political unity extending over more or less area of this continent." An intimate study of the history of India would reveal to the reader the truth that India's downfall through ages had not been due to religion but due to perversion of religion. It is by broad acceptance and unreserved gift, it is by assimilation and synthesis that India has enriched its civilization, nay the civilization of mankind. India teaches 'unity in diversity', a lesson that Vincent Smith gives us while writing its history. India's *dharma* teaches one to worship Christ and Krishna, Mahammad and Buddha in equal reverence. Nowhere have been made so many experiments with religion through and beyond all religious observances and rituals, in order to know the real truth—which is *ekam sat bipra bahudha badanti*. There is One and only One, the sages speak of that One's numerous revelations.

True *Dharma* that India practised in its glorious days of political supremacy in the past may be best illustrated by an inscription of that great Maurya Emperor Asoka, who incidentally was the greatest proselytising Buddhist, converting Buddhism, a local religion of India into a world religion. In Rock Edict XII Asoka says, "He who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own, with intent to enhance the splendour of his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts the severest injury on his own sect." What Asoka preached, he practised. This is perhaps the best example of a wonderful synthesis between Dharma and Rajadharma, between Religion and politics; and this is the ideal that India has bequeathed to posterity. That tradition was lost in the days of India's downfall, and that downfall was both the cause and the consequence of the loss of that tradition.

Materialism of the west has thrown up a new challenge to India. We are thinking of ignoring the national genius of India; that will bring destruction, Swamiji warns. Should we forget the significance of the advent of Ramakrishna so soon ? He symbolised eternal India, the land where all religions meet. There are as many paths as there are creeds or opinions (*jata mat, tata path*). All roads are true thoroughfares leading on to the eternal Truth or Brahman. And Ramakrishna practised in his own life of *sadhana* the truth of this 'unity in diversity'.

And Vivekananda was his disciple, nay something more, his living commentary and bold elucidation. Like a meteor, he travelled from the east to the west and from the west to the east. He based all his teachings and preachings on the Vedanta which codifies universal religion, and he himself was a practical Vedantist. Dharma or religion, he reminded the west, would be the gift of India to the west, which in its own turn has given to the east science and energy and material amenities in profusion. The religion, that Vivekananda, the prophet of the new age, preached and practised was not a cry to go back but was a call to go forward. It is what strengthens man, for man is ultimately the soul. It is what makes the world an abode of the really happy and prosperous. It is what makes peaceful co-existence a reality. It is what gives fruition to Wendell Wilkie's 'One World' ideal.

When would free India realise this precious heritage of hers and give to the anxious world the final message of deliverance ? When would the United Nations Organisation be also the United Commonwealth of Religion ? When would politics be humanised by the touch of the religion of man ? When, pray, when ?

VEDANTA AND THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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Introduction

At the outset let me pay my humble and respectful homage to Swamiji, who dreamt of a 'Parliament of Man and a Federation of the World-cultures', and who worked for freeing the sleeping forces of the enslaved spirit of man, to re-awaken God in man, to re-create our Being. Surely, the soul-stirring, life-giving and energy-radiating message of this 'soul of puissance' shall echo through the halls of time until time shall be no more. It is most befitting, therefore, that the various aspects of Swamiji's ocean-like vast thoughts should be discussed at this historic Parliament of Religions convened to observe his first birth centenary. The subject I have chosen for discussion to-day is 'Vedanta and the Social Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda'.

Now, I choose to call this Parliament historic not only because it has been convened to celebrate this world-teacher's first birth centenary but also because it has met at a very critical period of our history as well as the history of the world. It is a period of serious crisis in values. India is now enmeshed in materialism—a materialism which is crude and trivial,—although it pains us terribly to confess it before the world. This is partly due to our suffering from poverty and hunger for centuries, partly due to our sudden jump into a very quick process of material advancement since our independence, and also due to India's latest encounter with a new wave of thought that has of late come from the West, viz. Marxism. And Marxism has a very attractive alternative name to flare up the imagination of the young people and that is 'Historical-Scientific-Materialism'. It is only very natural that the marvels of modern science would lead our young men to pay their first homage to science above everything else. Hence, this new Faith—'Historical-Scientific-Materialism'—found an easy ground even in this land of spirituality and made our young generation—at least a large section of it—denounce religion as 'the opium of the people', as something very primitive and also to denounce India's age-old spiritual culture. These youngmen question such traditional values as 'Sraddha', 'Chastity' and look with abhorrence upon the gospel of 'Daridranarayan' held so high by Swamiji. Of course, it is true that in the course of her five-thousand years of long life, India withstood many such onslaughts of materialism and ultimately her eternal grand message of the spirit came out triumphant over them all. Yet for the present, the situation undoubtedly poses a serious problem for us.

Curiously enough, many of these young men claim Swamiji as belonging to their own fold and as one who was in many respects a fore-runner of the modern social revolutionaries of the West and a follower of Karl Max ! In one of his letters Swamiji declared, "I am a Socialist", and in another place he said, "There will be a Sudra uprising with their Sudra-hood." Hence, to them Vivekananda is the most wonderful prophet who in spite of being a religious preacher and without being an economist or a sociologist could unerringly prophesize about the proletkut (proletariat culture) and of the proletariat revolution taking place either in China or in Russia at a time when Lenin himself had not dreamt of it, when Mao Tse-Tung was not born, when the Bolshevik Party had not even come into existence. In spite of his most wonderful prophetic vision, to them, again Vivekananda was a confused youth with a very complex character reflecting inconsistencies, as he was progressive in his attitude towards Socialism and reactionary in his attitude towards religion[1]. Finally, to some of them, again, Vivekananda's Socialism is a sort of romantic Socialism like the Socialism of St. Simon and other Christian missionaries of the eighteenth century. Now, all these opinions reveal a very painful distortion of values and a colossal misunderstanding of history and the social process and complete ignorance of the twentieth century science. This Parliament of Religions, I feel, has a historical role to play in this respect. It is expected very naturally to place before the suffering world a revaluation of the perennial values of life expounded in Vedanta and other religions and philosophies of the world. This present paper is an humble attempt towards fulfilling this object as it seeks to evaluate Marxism in the light of modern Science and Vedanta and to discuss the social philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, which sprang out of Vedanta.

Nineteenth Century Science and Marxism

In the nineteenth century Science proclaimed that the Universe was an automatic machine made of tangible matter and operating under immutable laws. The four main props of this theory are:—(1) the nebular theory of the Universe, (2) the atomic theory of Physics, (3) the theory of protoplasm and evolution in Biology, and (4) the behaviorist theory of Psychology. The main contention of this mechanistic and materialistic science and its philosophy is this: This universe and the planet we inhabit have a long process of evolution behind. Life occupies an infinitesimal small fraction of this cosmic universe and has sprung out of an accidental, chemical and thermal combination. The protoplasmic cell manifested first symptoms of life. This germ of life multiplied and evolved into species under the pressure of natural environment till it developed a nervous system. Our thinking and feeling are caused by the movements of the nerve cells of our brains and by the secretion of the glands. This sensible universe, life and mind, all resolve into matter and mechanical motion.

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[1] Dr. B. N. Dutta: *Swami Vivekananda—The Patriot Prophet.*

This mechanistic, materialistic and deterministic view of the universe is the basis of the Marxist philosophy, the gist of which is given below:

(*a*) *The Nature of Truth*: According to this philosophy the external world, and the forms of being can never be created and derived by thought out of itself, as has been assumed by the idealists like Hegel, but they could be created only from the external world. Thought and consciousness are the products of the human brain. Hence, says Engels, "If we deduce the world Schematism not from our minds but only through our minds from the real world, deducing the basic principles of being from what it is, we need no philosophy for this purpose, but positive knowledge of the world and what happens in it; and what this yields is also not philosophy, but positive science"[2]. And according to this positive science, as we have seen presently, the real world is composed of matter, and motion is the mode of existence of matter.

(*b*) *The Dialectical Methods of Hegel:* The dialectical methods developed by Hegel are applied by the Marxists to explain this motion because in the opinion of Marx and Engels "Natural Science has now advanced so far that it can no longer escape the dialectical synthesis" (Engels).

The Hegelian dialectics is based on the following three principles: (*i*) The law of unity of the opposites, (*ii*) The law of negation of negation, (*iii*) The law of transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa. (*i*) The first law means that the opposites express no absolute difference but are the same at bottom. All contradictions in life, e.g. debts and assets, positive and negative electricity are mutually transformable, (*ii*) The second law means that a change negates a given state. When a grain of barley germinates, it ceases to exist as such and a plant rises from it which is the negation of the grain. The plant produces grains of barley and when these have ripened, it dies. Hence, there is negation of negation. As a result of this negation of negation we have once again not a single grain of barley but manifold of it, (*iii*) As regards the third law, Hegel points out that when quantitative changes go beyond a point they change into quality by a sudden leap. The rise of organic form from the inorganic matter, origin of the living cell from the inanimate objects, the differentiation of organism into various species, growth of the nervous system—all these illustrate the operation of this law.

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[2] *Anti-Duhring.*

Thus, through the operation of these laws, complete new objects come into existence, and these objects were not in existence anywhere in the universe before, they are completely different from the old ones and are absolutely new, although they spring out of the old. Virtually thus according to Hegelian dialectics, something comes out of nothing !

(*c*) *Dialectics as applied to Society by Marx:* According to Marx, the process of evolution of the human society is the same as that of nature, i.e. the dialectical process. Every existing tendency in society (i.e. thesis) produces its opposites (i.e. antithesis) in its process of continuous change. This leads to its disruption and to its supersession by another which is a synthesis of both.

(*d*) *Economic Determinism:* Again, according to Marx the method of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual aspects of life. The political, legal, moral and cultural systems grow upon the economic sub-structure. As in nature, contradiction in society appears. In the process of development of the system of production changes in the forces of production, i.e. in instruments, technical knowledge etc. take place which call for changes in relation of production (i.e. in class-relations). Each social system gathers defenders whose interests are bound up with its continuance. These classes cling to their powers and privileges and gives resistance to those who demand a share in the fruits of their common effort. They also use the coercive machinery of the State to suppress their rival classes. Hence, the political and social institutions have a tendency to lag behind the evolution of productive forces, and are brought to correspond to it only by the sharp jerk of a revolution.

(*e*) *The Doctrine of Class-struggle:* Thus, history proceeds through class-struggle. Different classes get prominence in different periods and use the machinery of the State to subserve their own interests. Hence, State is a characteristic institution of the class society.

(*f*) *Man's Part in History:* Now the question arises as to what is man's part in history. According to Marx man is free only within the material conditions prevailing. Man's thoughts and desires are not products of free thinking and desiring but are the outcome of legal and moral systems under which a man lives. And these systems, as we have seen just now, are determined by the prevailing economic system—the production, exchange and distribution systems. Hence, the quintessence of this 'Historical-Scientific-Materialism' is that mind is derivative and matter is the ultimate determinator of the course of history !

Impact of Modern Science on Marxism

The entire basis of this Marxist dogma—the materialistic, mechanistic and deterministic science has been exploded by the twentieth century advancement of knoweldge. Thus, as has been remarked by Prof. P. A. Sorokin, "Around the bend of quantum mechanics and at the foot of the electronic ladder the basic notion of materialistic and mechanistic science such as matter, objective reality, time, space, causality are no longer applicable and the testimony of our senses largely loses its significance."[3] For this modern science matter has become a condensed form of energy which dematerialises into radiation. Thus the atomic theory of Physics has been completely revolutionised. "The material atom is already dissolved into thirty non-material inscrutable elemental particles like the electron, anti-electron, proton, anti-proton, photon, meson etc. or into the image of waves which turn out into the waves of probability, the waves of consciousness which our thoughts project afar".[3] For this reason, scientists like James Jeans have been led to remark that "the universe begins to look like a great thought rather than like a great machine" and the great physicist Prof. Eddington came to opine "reality does not consist of atoms and electrons, it is mental and spiritual in character".

Again, the theory of deterministic causality, which lies at the root of the doctrine of economic determinism of Marx, was replaced in the modern science by Heisenberg's principles of uncertainty by fanciful quanta-jumps, by a mere chance-relationship, and in the psychological phenomena—by 'voluntaristic, free-willing law of direction' exempt from causality and chance. In the field of Biology, laboratory failed to demonstrate that protoplasm is a chemical compound. Thus every link of the chain of the Marxian thought has been weakened by the discoveries of the twentieth century science. Modern science is now on the verge of declaring that ultimate reality is a vast mass of consciousness. And this has also been the main contention of the Vedanta philosophy of India.

Vedanta and the Modern Science

According to the Advaita Vedanta Philosophy there is only one thing real in the universe—the Brahman which is Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute. Thus Vedanta propounds unity of the universe in the spirit. In the nineteenth century when Swamiji was expounding Vedanta in the West, science propounded unity of the universe in matter. And even then Swamiji declared: "The conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions of the Vedanta, only they are written in the language of matter." In the twentieth century the language of science has changed,—the language of matter has given place to the language of spirit, the very language of Vedanta as according to modern science, Reality is more a conscious process than a mere mechanical motion. Thus, we find that

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[3] P. A. Sorokin: *Three Basic Trends of Our Time*, Vedanta and the West, No. 139.

Vedanta, as expounded by Swamiji, is in complete accord with the twentieth century science.

Hegelian *vs.* Vedantic Dialectics

Not only the scientific basis of Marxism has been proved unsound, but also the logical prop of it, the Hegelian dialectics, on a careful examination falls to the ground. In the first place, it fails to point out the real basis of the unity of the opposites. As we have seen already, according to Hegel, the universal phenomenon is full of contradictions. If we affirm anything 'is', we must simultaneously admit it 'is not'. A thing is thus 'is' and 'is not' at one and the same time. These opposites are reconciled in a higher proposition—the synthesis. But Hegel failed to provide a satisfactory explanation as to how and why these higher propositions appear as a set of contradictions. His explanation is: First, there is 'being', then this 'being' passes into 'nothing', because the two are identical. Then 'nothing' passes back into 'being'. The disappearance of each category into the other, namely the passage of 'being' and 'nothing', into each other leads to a third category 'becoming'. The first form is beginning, arising, coming into being, the second is ending, ceasing, passing away. Thus we start with 'being' out of which appears 'nothing', out of the relation of the two emerges 'becoming'. The higher relation, where there is reconciliation, therefore manifests through these two forms 'being' and 'nothing'. Thus, thesis and anti-thesis are imperfect expressions of the more perfect synthesis. The question then arises: can the imperfect evolve into perfection ? Hegel's answer is in the affirmative. According to him, the Reality, the Absolute, the Idea, the Infinite perfection, proceeds to reveal its perfection through history. Vedanta shows that this is logically untenable because perfection is infinity and manifestation means limits. If the perfection manifests itself, then it becomes unlimited limits which is impossible. According to Vedanta what is perfection is always perfection, it can never be imperfect and what is imperfect is always imperfect, it can never become perfection. Therefore, the Vedantic explanation of the co-existence of the opposites is that this contradiction is only seeming and not real. The opposites are one and the same thing and is always in perfect harmony. Hence the question of manifestation of the imperfect contradictions into perfection does not arise at all. It is Maya that the perfection appears like contradictions. The logical inconsistency involved in the Hegelian dialectics is removed by the theory of Maya, the best exponent of which in the modern era is Swami Vivekananda. Thus, the Swami says explaining Maya, "In the objective society there will always be a mixture of good and evil—objective life will always be followed by its shadow, death. In objective life every bullet has a billet—evil goes with every good as its shadow. This mixture of good and evil, of life and death, knowledge and ignorance is what is called Maya or the universal phenomenon". Explaining the matter further Swamiji observes: "Good and evil are not two things, but one, the difference being only in manifestation—one of degree and not of kind. Thus the same truth manifests—both in our relative error and knowledge, the same bliss manifests itself as good and evil; and the same real existence appears as both life and death". Actually, therefore, contradiction is not true, harmony and oneness is true. Refuting the Hegelian logic Swamiji, again, remarks: "Attempts have been made in Germany to build a system of philosophy on the basis that the Infinite becomes finite. The analysis of the position of these philosophers is this that the Infinite is trying to express itself in this universe and that there will come a time when the Infinite will succeed in doing so. It is all very well, but the philosophers naturally ask for a logical fundamental basis for the statement that the finite can fully express the Infinite". Thus, if the contradictions are real, then there cannot be any harmony or real unity between them. Hence the Vedantic conclusion stands that the contradictions are mere appearances and not true at bottom and that the universe as we think of it does not exist. "The Absolute does not change or re-evolve. In the little amœba is that perfection latent." According to Vedanta, therefore, perfection which is unchangeable has not become the universe (as Hegel thinks), we see the unchangeable perfection as the universe. It is to be noted here that this theory of Maya does not imply idealism. It does not say that this universe does not exist; it exists, but at the same time, it is not what we take it for. For instance, in the darkness of night, a stump of a tree is looked upon as a ghost by some superstitious persons, as a policeman by a robber, as a friend by some one waiting for his companion; in all these cases, the stump of the tree did not change, but there were apparent changes, and these changes were in the minds of those who saw it. In the same manner, Absolute truth never changes, yet it appears as changing, as manifesting itself through contradictions, as passing through 'being' into 'nothingness' and through 'nothingness' into 'becoming'. All these changes,—all these contradictions are, therefore, projections of our mind, Maya and not true. Hence, there is no birth and death, no beginning, arising, coming into being, and then ending, ceasing and passing away as is supposed by Hegel.

This logical inconsistency in Hegel made him formulate certain very absurd postulates regarding historical processes and human institutions. For example, he asserted—"It may be said of universal History, that it is the exhibition of spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is potentially" and "the shape which the perfect embodiment of spirit assumes is the state!"[4] Marxism was a natural reaction against such absurdities propounded by Hegel, although Marx also used the same logical incongruities called dialectics which landed him in no less logically untenable positions (discussed in the next few pages of the paper). Vedanta professes, on the other hand, that the world as it appears is ever imperfect and therefore the sum-total of good and evil in the universe is always the same. Not an iota of the total amount of evil can decrease, nor can the good that exists in the world increase by an iota, whatever amount of historical or any other evolution may take place. Again, according to Vedanta, every finite object is imperfect and hence naturally, the state which is a finite thing has always its deficiencies. It is absurd to say, Vedantists would assert, that the state is the perfect embodiment of the spirit.

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[4] *Philosophy of History*—Hegel (Reproduced in Henry D. Aicken—*The Age of Ideology*—Chapter on Hegel).

It is clear from the above discussion that the first proposition of the Hegelian dialectics, the unity of the opposites has not been formulated in a very convincing manner by its exponent. As regards the other two propositions of Hegelian dialectics viz, 'the law of negation of negation' and 'the law of quantity transformation into quality,' we find in the same manner that they cannot satisfy our reason. They are mere assertions and no rational explanation is provided by Hegel to support them. Vedanta shows that it is not possible for a cell to differentiate into higher organism for unconscious beings to manifest consciousness unless the highest form of existence, highest form of consciousness, lies in it as a potential force, for something can never come out of nothing. In the language of Swamiji, "Everything in the universe begins from certain seeds, certain rudiments, certain fine forms, and becomes grosser and grosser and again goes back to that fine form and subsides." Thus, when a grain of barley germinates, there is no negation of the grain, as the grain is the finer form of the plant which again, is the grosser form of the grain. Hence what happens at the time of the germination of the grain is that the finer form becomes grosser. Similarly, when the plant dies, leaving several grains, the plant is not destroyed, only it re-enters into its finer form of existence. Hence there is no negation of negation. If it had, been so, it would have been not possible for the grain to grow into plants again, for out of a state of negation or complete annihilation nothing can come back. Hence Vedanta propounds that to every process of evolution there is a corresponding process of involution. Nothing is ever destroyed, everything, every species, every object, every being existed through eternity and will exist through eternity.

Again, quantity changes cannot bring into existence a new quality. Because that amounts to something being created out of nothing which is impossible.

Two conclusions emanate from the above truth: (1) that cause and effect are one and the same thing. The evolution in the grosser form appears as the effect and the involved finer form as the cause; (2) that the inseparable process of involution and evolution is operating in nature continuously in a wave-like form.

Again, two corollaries follow from the above two propositions: (1) First, if we can find the 'end' we can find the 'beginning'. Thus, if we find the perfect man like Buddha in the end, then it must have been inlaid in the protoplasmic existence also in the beginning. Therefore the protoplasm is the involved stage of intelligence and consciousness. Swami Vivekananda claims that this can be proved mathematically. Thus he observes—"If the law of conservation of energy is true, you cannot get anything out of a machine unless you put it in this first. If that be the case then unless intelligence and consciousness is present in the protoplasm, it cannot manifest these in its higher forms."

(2) Secondly, because of the same logic, (as has been clearly demonstrated by Swamiji in his exposition of the practical Vedanta) "the universal cosmic intelligence or God according to the theologians is the ultimate cause of the universe. And the universe in its true nature is the cosmic intelligence or consciousness."

Thus we find that the Hegelian propositions—(*i*) the unity of the opposites, (*ii*) the negation of negation, (*iii*) the quantity transformation into quality—are not the satisfactory explanation of the universal phenomenon. That explanation is better provided by Vedanta and its theory of Maya being integrated with the theory of immanent change and Involution of Samkhya philosophy. Hence, it appears that Vedantic dialectics composed of (*i*) The doctrine of Maya, (*ii*) The doctrine of Immanent change, (*iii*) The doctrine of Involution provides a much more perfect logical apparatus for a philosopher than the Hegelian dialectics composed of (*i*) the theory of the unity of opposites, (*ii*) the theory of negation of negation and (*iii*) of the theory of quantity transformation into quality.

Vedanta and the Social Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda

Out of this scientific and perfectly rational Advaita Vedanta philosophy emerges the social philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. In fact, the whole of the abstruse and elaborate Vedanta philosophy was reduced by Swamiji into two basic principles:

1. The divinity of man.
2. The essential spirituality of life.

From these two basic principles, again, follow two other very significant corollaries:

1. That every state, every society, every religion must be based on this all-powerful presence latent in man.
2. That in order to be fruitful, all human interests should be guided and controlled according to the ultimate idea of spirituality of life.

If we ponder over these propositions for a while it would become apparent that a true classless society, a society based on equal human rights for every individual is the final outcome of the Vedanta made practical. For if 'behind the strong and the weak, behind the low and the high, behind everyone, there exists the same wonderful soul assuring to every one the infinite possibility and infinite capacity to be good and great' as Vedanta proclaims, then none can be denied fullest opportunities to unfold his potential capacity which is his birthright. Advaita, therefore, strikes at the very root of all privileges. None can be a Vedantist and at the same time admit privilege to any one either mental, physical or spiritual. Hence, commenting on the matter Swamiji says, "The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege ? All knowledge is in everyone, even in the most ignorant, he has not manifested it, but perhaps he has not the opportunity; when he will get the opportunity he will manifest it and as to spirituality, no privilege should be claimed. . . . The most ignorant man, the most ignorant child is as great a messenger of God as any that has ever existed. The work of Advaita is, therefore, to break down all privileges." From the practical standpoint Advaita Vedanta is therefore, a gospel of revolution—revolution against a system of privilege.

Historical basis of Swamiji's Social Philosophy

Swamiji's Social Philosophy as described above, is not only scientific and perfectly logical but also deeply rooted in history. Here also one wonders how Vivekananda in those days of Idealistic Interpretation of History could apply the very modern Sociological method of studying history which is said to have originated from Marx. In his studies on "Modern India", "Aryans and Tamilians", "Historical Evolution of India" he applies 'these methods of studying history from the bottom up.' The limited space of this paper would not permit us to discuss this point in detail. Through these historical investigations, Swamiji presented to us his doctrine of class-struggle which in many respects is similar to that of Karl Marx. For instance, according to him, also as according to Marx, historical evolution proceeds through class-struggle. But there are also important points of dissimilarity between them. According to Swamiji, for example, "human society is governed in turn by the four castes—the priests, the soldiers, the traders and the labourers". Marx's stages are different. First, comes the stage of primitive communism, then the class society with its three distinct phases—Slavery, Feudalism and Capitalism, finally emerges the classless society divided into two phases—proletariat dictatorship and the final stage of completely classless society where the "state simply withers away". Again, according to Swamiji, each of the period of class-rule has its merits and defects. Thus, there is tremendous exclusiveness in the period of rule of the priestly class combined with cultivation of sciences and advancement of learning. The second stage is characterised by extreme tyranny and cruelty but development of art and culture is highest at this stage. During the third stage, i.e. during the rule of the Vaisyas, material prosperity is maximised and there is dissemination of culture over widest possible area, yet it is characterised by its silent crushing and blood-sucking power of the poor. The last stage, i.e. "the period of Sudra rule is the period of widest distribution of physical comforts but will be accompanied by lowering of cultures". Thus, Swamiji never thought like Marx that the proletariat rule woul be an ideal one and he supported it "not because it is a perfect system, but because half a loaf is better than no bread".

Finally, according to Swamiji, historical evolution does manifest not only class-struggle but also another wave-like motion, i.e. successive ascendency and descendeney of spirituality and materialism. Thus, in the words of Swamiji "two attempts have been made in the world to found social life. The one was founded upon spirituality, the other upon materialism. Curiously enough, at times it seems that the spiritual side prevails and then the material side in wave-like motions following each other". Swamiji also describes in detail how these waves actually roll down: "In the same country there will be different tides; at one time the full flood of materialistic idea prevails; and everything in this life—prosperity, the education which procures more pleasures, more food—will become glorious first and then, that will degenerate and degenerate. Along with the prosperity will rise to white heat all the inborn jealousies and hatred of the human race, and competition and merciless cruelty will be the watchword of the day. Then the people think that the whole scheme of life is a failure. And the world will be destroyed, had not spirituality come to rescue and lend a helping hand to the sinking world. Then the world gets new hope and finds a new basis for a new building and another wave of spirituality comes, which in time again declines. As a rule, spirituality brings a class of men who lay exclusive claim to the special powers of the world, the immediate effect is a reaction towards materialism. . . . Materialism comes as a rescue."[5] For instance, the materialism in the present era comes to the rescue of India by destroying the privilege of caste, by opening up the doors of education to everyone. Here lies the grandest analysis of the social forces where Swami Vivekananda, a religious preacher, indicates the true utility of materialism in social life.

The Social Process according to Swamiji

Swami Vivekananda's conclusion as regards the working of the social process is that "materialism and spirituality in turn prevail in society" and that civilisation advances when spirituality gains ground so that "civilisation means manifestation of spirituality". Actually when people are enmeshed in materialism, in sense-pleasures, their creativity does not manifest, their latent capacities lie unfolded in a dormant condition and thus there takes place gradual deterioration of culture. And as everybody claims a share in the means of enjoyment, there is a fierce conflict among the rival claimants and thus the class-war takes a severe and violent turn threatening in the end the integrity of the entire super-structure of society. But when spirituality ascends, the dormant creativity in the common men and women at large gets a chance to be unfolded and tremendous creativity is let loose leaving its stamp everywhere in arts and crafts, in thoughts and deeds, in organisation and administration. Also in this period the barriers of privilege break down as no one claims exclusive powers and greater harmony and peace exist in society. History provides ample proof of this fact, for example, after the advent of Buddha when there came one of India's greatest spiritual upheavals, India attained along with it perhaps its greatest achievements in arts, literature, economic prosperity—almost in all the secular fields of life.

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[5] Paramkudi Lecture.

Cycle-like Movement of Spirituality and Materialism—
Sorokin's theory *vs.* Swamiji's theory

This thesis of Swamiji finds support in Sociologist Sorokin's theory who wrote about thirty years after Swamiji's passing away. According to Sorokin the process of social change has three distinct stages—ideational, idealistic and sensate. The first is the stage of spiritual ascendency and transcendental view of truth and the last is the stage of ascendency of materialism when truth is assumed as nothing but a sensible reality. The second is a mixture of the two. In the first stage "The mentality of super-sensory truth or faith spiritualises everything, even the inorganic material phenomena and their motions and happenings". Similarly, in the last stage "mentality of the truth of the senses, which by definition perceive and can perceive only the material phenomena, materialises everything, like the spiritual phenomenon of the human soul." It is apparent that Sorokin's stages of social evolution uphold Vivekananda's thesis that materialism and spirituality in turn prevail in society. Moreover, Sorokin's view that class-war becomes intense during the sensate period and subsides in the ideational period is again, an echo of Vivekananda's view on the matter discussed in the previous section. Thus Sorokin says "in our developed sensate mentality everybody begins to fight for a maximum share of happiness and prosperity. This leads often to conflicts between sects, classes, states, provinces, unions etc. and often results in revolts, wars, class-struggles, over-taxation, which ruins security and in the long run makes economic prosperity impossible."

That we are passing through a sensate era at the present moment, is the opinion of both Sorokin and Swamiji. The latter commenting on the matter said about seventy years ago that "Tremendous power is being acquired by manufacture of machines and other appliances, and privilege is claimed to-day as it never has been claimed in the history of the World." The privilege-claiming by the capitalist producer of machine has bred revolutions in two important countries of the East and the West. Thus Vivekananda indicated clearly what actual history unfolded subsequently. And he pointed out the way out of the present evil thus—"That is why Vedanta wants to preach againt it."

Rhythmic theory of Social Evolution of Swami Vivekananda

According to Swamiji, as we have already noted in the course of our discussion, the process of social evolution is a wave-like process. Hence, he said—"All progress is in successive rise and falls" and "no progress is in a straight line". Modern sociologists also uphold this view and reject the linear theory of progress upheld by Karl Marx and his followers as unsound and unscientific. Prof. Sorokin in his gigantic work "The Social and Cultural Dynamics" attempted to elaborate this "Theory of Rhythm". According to him this theory is based on two other theories: (*i*) the Theory of limit and (*ii*) the Theory of immanent change. According to the first: there is limit to every manifestation along a particular line. "Newton's law tells us why this is so. Definite movement in one direction is impossible because friction and shocks of external forces would disturb the movement and eventually change its direction. Through the gravitational forces, for instance, a linear movement becomes circular and elliptical" (Sorokin). And the social processes individually or in their totality are not absolutely isolated from the outside cosmological and biological worlds nor from the pressure of the 'social processes'. "Unless we postulate a miracle or an active providence," rightly observes Prof. Sorokin, "it is quite impossible that all these innumerable forces would be negligible or constant at any moment, thus maintaining the direction of the processes unchanged." Thus, there cannot be any movement in a straight line.

The second law tells us that each social system changes by virtue of its own virtues and properties—it bears in itself the seeds of its own change. It cannot help changing even if all its external conditions are constant. Thus the cause of the change is immanent in any socio-cultural process. Prof. Sorokin's arguments in support of this view run as follows: "Any consistent theory of externalistic change does not solve the problem, but merely postpones the solution, and then comes either to a mystery in a bad sense of the term or to the logical absurdity of pulling the proverbial rabbit out of nothing".

But Prof. Sorokin failed to realise that immanent change is not possible without the process of involution and also that without the process of involution it is not possible for the same socio-cultural system to re-appear again and again. It is shown by history that even in the sensate period, it is found that spiritual force does not disappear into but remains in a dormant stage. So, in the socio-cultural field also as in the field of biological evolution immanent change is due to the process of involution. Thus the logical gap in Sorokin's otherwise very rational theory of socio-cultural change is removed when supplemented by Swamiji's thoughts. We have already seen that the Vedantic dialectics consisting of (1) the theory of Maya, (2) the theory of Immanent change, (3) the theory of Involution is more perfect than the Hegelian dialectics consisting of the (1) the law of the unity of the opposites, (2) the law of negation of negation and (3) the law of the quantity transformation into quality. Now, it is established that this Vedantic dialectics when applied to society gives us the most satisfactory explanation of social changes. Indeed the theory of social change has reached a rational perfection in the hands of Swami Vivekananda which was never attained before.

Historical Scientific Spirituality of Swami Vivekananda

This social philosophy of Swami Vivekananda may, therefore, be termed 'Historical-Scientific-Spirituality' just as the Marxian doctrine has got the name 'The Historical-Scientific-Materialism'. The main contention of this 'Historical-Scientific-Spirituality' is that history means manifestation of spirituality in wave-like form. Just as every wave creates a hollow, every upheaval of spirituality creates a hollow in its trail in the form of an upsurge of materialism. We should remember, here, again, even at the cost of repetition, that this theory is not the same as the Hegelian Idealistic Interpretation of History as popularly upheld at present. It does not say that the truth which is infinite perfection manifests itself through history. It says that truth appears as the imperfect universe due to Maya. This theory of Maya, to repeat again, does not say that the universe does not exist, it only says that it is not what we take it for. Hence, it does not ask individuals to give up the world and be passive, it rather tells individuals that they are not mere finite bodies, but infinite soul and therefore urges them to make continuous attempts to manifest their latent capacities and to break down privileges. Clearly what Vedanta implies is an elevation of the individual and 'root and branch reform' of society. Therefore, our final conclusion is that Vedanta is not idealism, it is on the one hand a wonderful positivism and a perfect realism, on the other hand an extremely dynamic philosophy.

The Doctrine of Supremacy of the Soul over Matter

It was very rightly pointed out by Karl Manheim in his 'Systematic Sociology' that Karl Marx was too much influenced by two nineteenth century phenomena—viz. the industrial and technological revolution and Darwin's theory of evolution. The tremendous impact of technology over society witnessed by Karl Marx himself during his life-time led him to propound the theory of economic determinism—the theory of supremacy of technology over human soul,—the theory of supremacy of matter over mind. With the crash of the nineteenth century mechanistic-materialistic-deterministic science in the present century his theory of determinism also fell to pieces. Modern sociologists are of the opinion that the social super-structure is dependent as much on religion and ethical forces as on technology and invention. Hence Karl Manheim commenting on the matter, says, "it is inevitable that economic interests should be overshadowed from time to time by religious, cultural and ethical forces."

Individual Liberty and Swamiji's Socialism

Swami Vivekananda's social philosophy originating from the Vedanta is in this respect diametrically opposed to that of Karl Marx as it asserts supremacy of spirit over matter and accepts man as a free agent and aims at freeing the sleeping forces of man's enslaved spirit by granting him the widest possible liberty. Swamiji declares: "Liberty is the first condition of growth." As Marxism takes man as an agent bound to matter, enslaved by technology, it recommends subservience of man to the grinding machine of social supremacy. Thus, Vivekananda's social philosophy propounds a classless society based on individual liberty and seeks to root Socialism on Democracy, whereas Marxism indicates a classless society tied to a totalitarian state. The Marxist doctrine—of ultimate withering away of the state and of passing away of the phase of proletariat dictatorship giving place to a democratic order—has proved a utopia by the actual course of the history of Socialism in Russia and China to-day. Hence the Marxist ideal to-day is completely divorced from the democratic ideal. But the ideal of individual freedom is held supreme above everything else by the Vedantic social philosophy according to which (in the language of Swamiji) "to advance oneself towards freedom, physical, mental and spiritual, and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man". Hence Swamiji could not tolerate the idea of sacrificing individual liberty to social supremacy. Thus he says in his forceful language: "Can that be called a society which is formed by an aggregate of men, who are like lumps of clay, like lifeless machines, like heaped-up pebbles? How can such a society fare well? For in such a society all initiative, all inventive genius, all capacities of appreciation and discrimination in individuals are stifled to death". According to Swamiji, this is the path of individual annihilation and social distintegration. He asserts that "Greater is the happiness, higher is the Jiva in proportion as this will (free will) is successfully manifest" and that "it is more blessed in my opinion, even to go wrong by one's free will and intelligence than to be good as an automaton." So, he asks us to "destroy those social rules which stand in the way of unfoldment of this freedom and therefore injurious." Thus the Democratic Ideal of individual liberty is held highest by the Vedantic social philosophy.

At the same time, Swamiji did not support the nineteenth century individualism according to which liberty means absence of restraint. According to Swamiji, "Liberty does not mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of other people's wealth etc. by you and me, but it is our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence or wealth according to our will, without doing harm to others". Clearly this is a socialistic interpretation of liberty, where liberty is not a negative concept, but a positive one, where it refers not to absence of restraints but to positive opportunities. D. Burns in conclusion of his famous book 'Political Ideals' remarks: "If we could imagine an ideal which is at once individualistic and socialistic, such would be the objective ideal for the most thinking man. For the individualist is right in aiming at the variety of individuals, and so is the socialist in impressing on all their common interest, for the fullest development of each is to be found in the performance of his function in the life of the whole". This much-coveted ideal, at once individualistic and socialistic, has got an excellent expression in the hands of Swamiji by the magic touch of his genius. Romain Rolland truly remarked: "In two words—equilibrium and synthesis Vivekananda's constructive genius can be summed up". Swamiji succeeded in working out this most baffling synthesis by applying one Vedantic principle viz. "बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय"—i.e. for the good of the many and for the happiness of the many.

As the same soul resides in me, resides in all, individual happiness is inseparable from the happiness of the many. Hence securing this happiness of the many should be the watchword of the society and the watchword of all our individual activities. Individuals should be taught that their individual happiness could be attained only through the happiness of all. An individual should willingly sacrifice his selfish interests to serve the interests of all. Thus Swamiji's doctrine in the happiness of the many lies the happiness of the individual, in the good of the many lies the good of the individual shows the way of integrating individualism to socialism.

Vedantic Conception of Equality

A few words are necessary in the discussion on the Vedantic conception of equality. To borrow Swamiji's language, "The whole universe is a play of unity in variety", and "differentiation is the sign of life". That all men should be the same can never be, however we may try. Men will be born differentiated, some will have more power than others, some will have natural capacities, others not. Therefore, according to Swamiji, it is obvious that the sameness as regards the external forms and positions can never be attained. But "what can be attained is elimination of privilege". And according to Swamiji, "that is really the work before the whole world". In all social lives, there has been this one fight in every race, and in every country. Explaining the matter further Swamiji observes, "The difficulty is not that one body of men are more intelligent than another but whether this body of men, because they have the advantages of intelligence, should take away even physical enjoyments from those who do not possess this intelligence". Hence, Vedantic conception of equality is sought to be realised not by stopping variation but by removing privileges based on variation. Stopping variation is impossible, because that is going against nature. The Marxist idea is different. For instance, in the village communes of China to-day everybody is made to wear the same kind of dress and imbibe the same taste, to take the same food. Even the individual family units are not allowed to exist. Thus variation as regards dress, tastes, habits and family life are attempted to be done away with. That this is a wrong conception of equality and is far away from the true conception of it is apparent from our discussion about Vedantic view of equality. True equality allows individual variation and seeks to eliminate privileges and actualise in society a unity in variety.

Priestcraft and Religion

Swami Vivekananda's historical investigations, from the Vedantic standpoint have enriched social science in another respect. By separating religion from priestcraft Swamiji succeeded in throwing a flood of light on the true nature of religion and its social functions. Karl Marx took religion and priestcraft in one and the same sense and hence came such observations from him as "Religion is the opium of the people", "Religion is the inverted picture of the mundane world" and so on and so forth; on the other hand, according to Swamiji, religion has nothing to do with priestcraft. True religion consists in "The manifestation of divinity in man". Hence, it is a process of "being and becoming", "being divine and becoming divine" and as such it is an extremely dynamic thing. It means awakening, it means transformation—transformation of the animal into man, of man into God. Finally, it means becoming fearless. Through elaborate sociological and anthropological investigations Swamiji showed that religion did not, in fact, originate in fear—in the primitive man's imagining supernatural forces behind the natural phenomena and soliciting their grace against nature's fury. According to him, further, in the primitive man's attempt to deify the different branches of nature and worship them, in his attempt to worship his ancestors, is manifest his desire to go beyond the limitations of nature and unveil the mystery of death. Moreover, Swamiji has made it clear that in the Semitic races feeling of suffering misery and fear dominated the earliest philosophical enquiries made by man and the Aryans' enquiry vibrated with immense joy of life that thrilled a healthy man's heart and the natural human desire to look through the mystery of birth and death. According to Swamiji the Semitic races started with the idea that the soul was inseparable from the body and hence the feeling of suffering took possession over them. But as the Aryans took the soul as something free from the body from the very start, they could attain the idea of liberation and eternal bliss. Now, the Marxist study of religion is based on the studies of the Semitic races made by Morgan and hence it accepts the theory that fear is the origin of religion. Swami Vivekananda's study of religion made on the basis of sociological studies of both Semitic and Aryan races shows that religion originated in fearlessness and its consummation in individual life is found in becoming absolutely fearless. In truth religion is a call to manifest man's latent capacity and break down the fetters of society, as we have again and again seen in the course of this discussion. Hence, it is apparent that true religion can never be the opium of the people and it never was so in history.

But priestcraft is different from true religion. According to Swamiji priestcraft is negation of religion and is a system of privilege on the ground of religion. Thus he says, "There cannot be any religion, where priestcraft arises" and that "Priestcraft is in its nature cruel and heartless. Therefore the Advaita preaches against it". Priestcraft is, in fact, making of privilege, and religion means breaking of it. Hence, Swamiji felt that religion was so very necessary for the modern world—it was more necessary for the lower classes than the higher, for the uneducated than the educated, for the backward, the downtrodden, the oppressed than for anybody else. Religion was needed by them according to Swamiji for recovering their lost and due rights. This was really revealing a very new role of religion in social life.

Conclusion

To sum up, Swamiji's social philosophy, which is deeply rooted in the Vedanta, has the following merits:

1. That it is extremely scientific;
2. That it is based on a perfect logical apparatus;
3. That it is based on the accepted and scientific theory of social change—The Theory of Rhythm;
4. That it is extremely dynamic—its central theme is root and branch reform of society;
5. That it points out clearly that in order to be fruitful all human

interests should be controlled and guided in accordance with the ultimate idea of spirituality of life. Thus the supremacy of spirit over matter is made to find way of actualisation in individual and social life.

Swami Vivekananda has utilised, as we have already noted in the course of our long discussion, four kinds of materials to build up his most remarkable and unique social philosophy,—discussed above:

1. Vedanta philosophy. He has himself called his social philosophy 'The practical Vedanta';
2. Discoveries of modern science;
3. Historical data and sociological method of historical study;
4. Knowledge gathered out of direct contact with the masses all over the world. As we all know Swamiji during his Indian itinerary visited the cottages and the fields, met pariahs and workers, lived among them, became one with their hopes and aspirations, miseries and sorrows. And Marie Louise Burke, the author of "*Swami Vivekananda—New Discoveries*", a monumental work, tells us how during his western tour Swamiji met not only intellectuals and elites of the society, but also the workers working in the factories, the artisans working with their tools, the farmers working in their fields. Hence, he could see clearly what was hidden in the womb of future and prophesied unerringly about the next era (of proletariat class rule dawning either in Russia or in China) and also of the proletkut.

That the Swami succeeded wonderfully in constructing out of these materials a very convincing—rationally and scientifically—and unassailable social philosophy in which he showed in unmistakable language the root of the present-day malady of our society and its cure—is the humble submission of this paper before this august assembly of world's religious scholars and men of letters.

Swami Vivekananda was a master architect as he had the combined insight of a sociologist, a scientist, a historian, a philosopher, a psychologist and a mystic. Thus the master architect has given us the plan, now it is our turn to rebuild our houses.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND WORLD PEACE

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It was fourteen or fifteen years ago that I got to know and made an acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The occasion was when Dr. Masakiyo Miyamoto translated the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda from the original French written by the great author Romain Rolland. Dr. Miyamoto asked me to comment on the description of the religious life and culture of India in Romain Rolland's works. Thus, I had the opportunity to study the biographies of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and I was very deeply impressed by these two sages. When the International Conference of Religions and Religious History was held in Tokyo two years after my return to Japan, I had the honor of meeting Swami Ranganathananda there and invited him to speak at Ryukoku University. It was through him that I came to know the activities of Ramakrishna Mission. I was given a small pamphlet, *Thoughts of Power* written by Swami Vivekananda, along with other publications by the Indian Embassy at Tokyo for the library of Ryukoku University. When I read this pamphlet, it made the deepest and greatest impression on me. The words which touched me most were, "I DO NOT BELIEVE IN A RELIGION OR GOD WHICH CANNOT WIPE THE WIDOW'S TEARS OR BRING A PIECE OF BREAD TO THE ORPHAN'S MOUTH." I feel that if I had not received such deep impressions from these words, I might have been unable to devote my energy and time from my valuable scholarly life for the preparation of Swami Vivekananda's centenary celebration which was held in Japan during the months of May and June last year and to become a member of the executive committee and the vice-chairman of the centenary celebrations committee. Also, I might not have attended the meetings in Hiroshima, Okayama, Kob, Kyoto, and Nagoya with Swami Siddhatmananda and delivered lectures on Vivekananda. Moreover, I might not have been staying here from December 22, 1963, in order to understand the spirit and activities of this institution.

I shall now begin to talk about the subject of my speech keeping in mind the above-mentioned words of Swamiji and I will content myself with explaining his true and universal love which are beautiful and precious like diamonds. The short sentence of the great saint which I quoted above shows two great problems facing humanity in our present age. These problems are, first, the materialistic civilization and, second, the religions of the world.

In regard to the first problem, I can tell you from my experience in Japan that Japanese life in modern Japan is certainly very comfortable and enjoyable. During the second World War, Japan lost most of her wealth by the attack of the American military force. Most of our important cities were burnt down and destroyed but ironically Japan who suffered so much has now become far more advanced materially than it was before the war. As a result, life in Japan has now become fast and busy with many amenities of worldly enjoyment. For instance, when a Japanese woman marries, she says that she must, first of all, have three treasures: a television set, an electric washing machine and a refrigerator. The young generation of farmers in Japan use motor-bikes and even motor cars when they go to their fields to work. On the other hand, in Japan there are many persons who are killed and injured by accidents caused by trains, electric cars, motor cars, and motor-bikes every day. Moreover, many boys and girls, and even children, die on the mountains and in the sea while they are there for enjoyment during the holiday seasons every year. Many other unfortunate accidents occur each day. Although there are many reasons for these accidents, they are mainly caused by a blind side of our mind and because we are in a way drunk with the wine of the enjoyable materialistic civilization. If we are to make a thorough investigation we will find that these accidents are caused when we forget others' good, trying to fulfil our own desires only enjoying things endowed by our materialistic civilization. This is an error which is brought about by egoism in the nature of human beings. However, even such accidents are better than the atomic bomb which is nothing but a demon and, a son of the materialistic civilization and we ought to fear it more. My own native city is Kure City which was a great naval base till the last great war, and is near Hiroshima City. As you know only too well, Hiroshima was bombed and destroyed in a moment and a few hundred thousands of men, women, and children were burnt to ashes by an atomic bomb used by the demon who lives in the mind of man. My own relatives and friends in Hiroshima lost not only their houses and wealth but also their lives. Every year, even today, some of the populace who were victims of the bomb and its effects suffer from various atomic diseases and face a miserable death. Having become a victim of a terrible type of cancer, one of my friends is now waiting for death in a hospital. Nagasaki City, too, experienced the same fate. Its terrible effects and the consequent misery can be known only to those who saw or experienced it. Such misery is not caused by the sin of the atomic civilization itself, but by the demoniac nature of the mind of man which cannot use it for a better cause. When the minds of human beings do not have any consideration for the welfare and benefit of others but only care for their own benefit, such a demoniac nature appears. We must, therefore, conquer and control the demon who lives in the minds of man. If we cannot do that, what will become of this earth ? Can you imagine how the Japanese underwent such terrible misery and how they hate this demon in the mind of man and how they are afraid of it ? In spite of that, the atomic civilization is progressing day by day. Some countries even now want to use the power of the atom for their own benefit and interest. That is to say, they are going to abuse the atomic civilization with the ambition to dominate over other nations on earth. If we permit the free play of such desires and allow such nations to dominate over others, whole mankind will sooner or later become extinct. But if we can control it and make a good use of the atomic civilization not only for ourselves but also for others, our life on this earth will become enjoyable and pleasant. I who have come here from a country which had such terrible experience of the atomic bomb propose especially to you that we must ask all the people of the world to co-operate with you people of India who are so religious, noble, and intelligent in controlling the egoists.

However, it is a difficult task to control such a devilish nature of our mind. Such a demon lives not only in others' minds but also in our own minds. But we must never allow this demon to act freely, though sometimes it suddenly and unconsciously appears in us and injures others, as well as ourselves. How can we control such devilish egoists ? I say that we can control this by the power of the noble spirit of religion.

I now come back to the second problem, the problem of religion. The demoniac nature in man, the egoism of human beings in the materialistic civilization, and the selfish uses of the atomic power are all dangerous. Nevertheless, such selfish uses can also be found in religions. Religions themselves have the highest power and spirit to save human beings from suffering and give peace of mind to them. One who accepts such a religion is really and truly a human being. But it is seen that he sometimes uses religion for his own happiness and injures others. He tries to conquer other nations, to put them under their power and to make them slaves. By studying history, one will find that religions were used for such means. Such abuse of religion can be found not only in the past but even at the present time. For instance, witness the inhuman treatment to be found in South Vietnam. Not only that, I have either heard about, or seen myself such abuse of religion in some countries and some cities before I came here. We never possess any exclusive religion of our own. If a god of any religion shows favour to the followers of that particular religion and hates and brings calamity to the followers of other religions, such a god is not the real God. He is the very incarnation of the Devil. At any rate, in most cases the god of every religion bestows blessings and love to all human beings and the doctrines of any religion are enough to lead us to happiness. There is only one problem, that is, the evil nature residing in our minds which is using religion only for our own happiness and prosperity and for exploiting other nations. This is the most terrible injury which can be caused by the selfish use of religion.

I repeat the words of Vivekananda: "I do not believe in a religion or God who cannot wipe the widow's tear or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth." These words have left a profound impression on my mind and I consider them as very precious. They can be easily understood by everyone. But if we study these words carefully and deeply, they will distinctly show harms of both the egoist of the materialistic civilization and those in the religious fields about whom I have talked at great length. This earth should not be possessed by us only for ourselves but must be shared among the people of the entire world. We must not shed tears only for ourselves, for our families, nor for our nations, but we must shed tears for others as well. We must bear others' burden on our shoulders. This idea is found in the words of Swami Vivekananda. His words caution us never to abuse any religion for our selfish purposes nor use anything for our sole benefit. The selfish man who cooks only for himself is called a "thief" by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. When we become aware of this, the widow's tears become our own tears, and only then, can we share our bread with the orphans. These words of the great saint teach us that we must love others as much as ourselves. By doing so, not only can we unite the followers of our own religion, we can also unite with those of other religions. Not only can we get together with our own people and nation, but also with other people and nation. These words of the great Swamiji show the method which can be applied easily and practically in bringing peace on this earth. In these words, I found the highest spirit of love for all human beings of the world. They do not teach any particular philosophy nor propound a particular religion, but teach us what we must do at this moment to wipe the widow's tears and bring bread to the orphan's mouth. However, it does not mean that we do only that. It means that we must make the poor and the miserable people happy in every way. These words of Swamiji advise us that by merely talking and discussing the noble teachings of religions will never make this earth happy, nor will it bring peace on this earth. It teaches us first and foremost that we love others and practise the teachings today and now.

Swamiji's words, "I do not care for liberation or for devotion; I would rather go to a hundred thousand hells 'doing good to others (silently) like the spring'....this is my religion," should also be considered as golden instructions for all the followers and monks of every religion. His words remind us that selfishness or egoism is contrary to the truth of all religions. His words also remind me of the practice of 'benefit for others' in Japanese Buddhism. This practice did not come out from worldly morality. Of what did it come out ? His words, "God exists in every man. All men are appearances of the various faces of God. Without men, there is no God to be sought for. Only those who serve all people really worship God !" manifest the stage of unity of Brahman-Atman, and could be uttered through his experience by one who could find himself in others. Such spiritual experience is taught in the Upanishads and is intrinsic in the doctrine of "Buddhatva in all beings" in Japanese Buddhism. His practice resulting from such religious experience is truly inflexible and unchangeable. It indeed kindles the torchlight of love for peace of the world which is trembling in fear of dangers of nuclear bombs.

Throughout his life, Swamiji taught people all over the world with his practice of the noble teachings that the spiritual unity of the nations through love would surely bring eternal beatitude and peace. I believe that his practice and words sprang from his great spirit of being freed from his self. His practice for others' benefaction is truly the "Bodhisattvacarya" taught in Buddhism. Although it is easy to talk of this ideal, it is extremely difficult for people like us, ordinary men, to practise it. However, on this worthy occasion of Swami Vivekananda's centenary celebration, we must recall anew in our minds the great meaning of establishing spiritual unity of all human beings in the world with love that Swamiji himself practised. We must be brave and we must endeavour to practise with all our might.

I believe that in its practice we can find brilliance of Swami Vivekananda's spirit. My water-pot which I brought from the far end of eastern Asia is eager to fill itself with AMRITA, that is to say, the project to practise the words of the great Swamiji during this celebration which is held in memory of his birth centenary.

"Hingashi-no hate-yu
mochikoshi waga kame-ni
Mitasu-wa KANRO
Swami Vivekananda-no."
"My water-pot in mind
Brought from the eastern end of Asia,
Must be filled with AMRITA,
Spirit of Swami Vivekananda."

SOCIAL VALUES IN HINDUISM

Swami Nikhilananda
New York

(*Summary of the Presidential Speech given at the final session of the Parliament of Religions*)

Social values belong to a realm of ethics. Hinduism discusses ethics from two standpoints: social or objective, and personal or subjective. The purpose of social ethics is to promote social welfare and thus create an ideal environment for developing the inner potentialities of its members. The aim of personal ethics is to purify the mind and thus create a proper mood for the practice of higher spiritual disciplines for the liberation of the soul from entanglement of the world.

Hindu ethics is based upon certain spiritual concepts. The ethics of non-dualistic Vedanta is derived from the solidarity of man and the oneness of existence; the ethics of dualism is derived from the doctrine that all beings are created by God and are therefore His children. Hindu ethics is different from the ethics of biology which stresses the survival of individuals or species by methods of competition or struggle for existence. It is different from the utilitarian ethics which seeks to promote the maximum good for the maximum number by eliminating friction from society. The example is given of a number of porcupines who are driven to seek a sunny spot from the bitter cold of a wintry morning. Their quills prick one another and thus create an uncomfortable situation. A kindly man covers each quill with a piece of felt to eliminate the pricks. Men are generally anti-social, brutish and nasty. Ethical laws act as a felt covering. According to Hinduism the excellence of a culture is not to be judged by the material affluence or creature comforts it provides. It extols the principle of plain living and high thinking. A man profits very little if he gains the whole world but loses his soul, as the Bible says.

Many Western thinkers criticize Hinduism, especially its non-dualistic aspect, as other-worldly and unrealistic. If the Ultimate Reality of Vedanta is beyond good and evil then, it is contended, social values become meaningless. If the world is *māyā*, social welfare loses its meaning. In that case, the Western thinkers say, the best thing would be to commit the world to the devil and seek one's own salvation away from society.

In reply it can be said that the majority of Hindus are dualists. They regard the world as real, and man's obligations to his fellow creatures cannot be repudiated. Compassion for all beings is a cardinal principle of dualism.

According to non-dualism, Brahman alone is real and changing names and forms are illusory. This refers to the ultimate experience of the illumined souls, but for the unenlightened, who seek liberation, the empirical reality of the world is admitted. The Muṇḍaka Upanishad says that the tangible world is real and Brahman is also real though under different conditions. The illustration is given of the mirage and the desert, and of the illusory snake superimposed upon a rope. Both the mirage and the illusory snake are real as long as one perceives them to exist but when one sees the desert and the rope, the water and the snake disappear. When you see the one you cannot see the other. The ultimate goal of Vedānta, as set forth in the Upanishad, is not to prove the reality of *māyā* but to demonstrate the sole reality of Brahman, "All that exists is Brahman." An unenlightened man under the spell of *māyā*, which is a sort of metaphysical ignorance, sees the duality of good and evil, pleasure and pain, ego and non-ego. Therefore he must work for the elimination of evil and pain and discharge various social obligations. The non-dualistic philosophers, from the relative standpoint, admit the reality of the universe and have formulated its theology, ethics, eschatology and other doctrines.

It has already been mentioned that the purpose of social ethics is to create an ideal society and to help the imperfect man get rid of self-centredness, greed, cruelty, and other vices. Without ethical restraints chaos reigns in society. It is said in the Upanishads that the gods or higher powers put obstacles in the path of those who seek liberation without first fulfilling social obligations. These powers are regarded as custodians of social stability. A normal person endowed with social conscience has a threefold duty to discharge. He has a debt to the gods who control various natural phenomena and help men with rain, sunshine, and so on. This debt is discharged through such religious rites as worship and prayer. Secondly, man owes a debt to the *ṛishis* who are the creators and transmitters of spiritual culture. This debt is paid through the regular study of the scriptures and the transmission of scriptural knowledge to worthy disciples. Finally, man owes a debt to his ancestors through whom he has acquired this precious physical body. This debt is paid through procreation of offspring. Thus with the blessings of the gods, *ṛishis* and ancestors, a man ultimately attains the highest good. It is the observance of social ethics which has preserved Hindu society during the past three thousand years in spite of many historical changes. Its neglect, on the other hand, during the past several centuries, has undermined its vitality.

The key to Hindu ethics, both subjective and objective, is the concept of *dharma*, which means the way of life and not mere duty or religion. Our duties are often determined by many external factors. Religion includes dogmas and creeds which bind one to an extra-cosmic God. *Dharma* is the law of inner growth by which a man is sustained in the present state of his evolution and which shows him the way to future development. It is a kind of blueprint of life with which a man is born and which is created by his past actions and knowledge. It determines a man's attitude to the outer world and governs his mental and physical reaction in a given situation. It is obvious that there are different *dharmas* which govern the activities of the householders and the monks, the warriors and the merchants, the laborers and of people following various other avocations of life. There is also the universal *dharma* which applies to all people under all circumstances. It includes truthfulness, non-violence and compassion. Specific *dharma* relates to particular castes and stages of life. In the relative world there is no absolute good or evil. There are many shades in-between. The attempt to formulate an absolute good and to impose it upon others has been the cause of much injustice and suffering in the world. Any form of *dharma* has an element of imperfection in it. It is said that one should speak what is true and pleasant but not an unpleasant truth. This dictum applies especially to householders who form the overwhelming majority in any organized society. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* says that one should not attempt to give up an imperfect *dharma*, the only way to avoid its evil effect is to surrender the fruit to God. In the battle-field of Kurukshetra Arjuna had to perform his duties which were not perfect and yet he obtained the highest vision of God, namely His universal form, as described in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

It will not be out of place to give here a few statements from Hindu religious traditions to show that Hinduism is not other-worldly or unrealistic or insensitive to social values. The Vedic seers regarded with awe the sun, the fire, the earth and composed many hymns in their honor. They reflected deeply on the moral principles guiding the universe and sang praises in honor of *Ṛitam*, the Cosmic Order. They did not deny the physical world nor did they spurn the pleasures it affords. It is said in the *Īśa Upanishad* that one should desire to live for one hundred years performing one's duties. The *Ṛishis* took keen interest in marriage, procreation, liberality, hospitality, longevity, health and vigor, domestic life, general prosperity, the welfare of the king, a righteous battle and such other mundane affairs.

One reads in the *Ṛig-Veda* about marriage: "I take your hand in mine for a happy future that you may reach old age with me as your husband." The *Atharva-Veda* says: "We will dwell together—parents of children to come."

About liberality: "Let the rich satisfy the poor and keep in view the long pathway. Riches come now to one, now to another, and like wheels of chariots are ever turning"—*Ṛig-Veda*.

Hospitality: "A man who eats before the guests, eats of the sacrifice and the merit of the house. He devours the milk, the sap, the vigor and prosperity and progeny and fame, reputation and understanding of the house"—*Atharva-Veda*.

Concord in council: "Walk together, speak together, let your minds be all alike. May the purpose be common, common the assembly, common the mind. May your thoughts be united"—*Ṛig-Veda.*

Longevity: "May we see a hundred years. May we live a hundred years. May we know a hundred years. May we assert our existence a hundred years; yea, even more than a hundred years"—*Atharva-Veda.*

Strength and vigor: "May I have voice in my mouth, breath in my nostrils, sight in my eyes, hearing in my ears, hair that hath not turned grey, teeth free from yellowness and much strength in my arms"—*Atharva-Veda.*

General prosperity: "O Lord, may there be born in the kingdom Brahmins distinguished for knowledge of Brahman, heroic Kshatriyas, skilled marksmen piercing with shafts mighty warriors, cows giving abundant milk, oxen good at carrying weight, swift horses and industrious women" —*Yajur-Veda,* XXII 22.

Victory in battle: "May Indra aid us when our flags are out; may our arms be victorious, may our brave warriors come home with flying colors. O Lord, protect us in the din of battle"—*Ṛig-Veda.*

"Confusing the minds of our enemies, seize their bodies; depart, O panic. Attack them, confound them, and consume them. Let our foes abide in darkness"—*Yajur-Veda.*

High moral tone of society: King Aśvapati says in the Chhāndogya Upanishad: "In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no wine-bibber, no man without a sacrificial fire, no ignorant person, no adulterer much less an adulteress."

Prayer for wealth: "Bring me without delay fortune which will always provide me with clothes and cattle, food and drink. May I become famous among men. May I become richer than the rich."

It will be seen from the above quotations that the Indo-Aryans in Vedic times lived a full and happy life. They never explained away the world as unreal. They communed with gods, discharged social responsibilities and showed compassion for other created beings. Social welfare is achieved through co-operation and not through competition. Pleasures derived from competition are temporary and boring at the end. On the other hand, pleasures derived from co-operation endure long and have a spiritual value.

For those who are weary of the world and the pleasures it affords, and who seek knowledge of Brahman for ultimate liberation, the Upanishads lay down various disciplines. The liberated souls devote themselves to the welfare of all beings. The Hindu scriptures do not repudiate the importance of moral actions. "As the scent is wafted afar from a tree laden with flowers, so also is wafted afar the scent of a good deed." [*Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad*] The seers of the Upanishads prayed for children, grandchildren, long life, gold and cattle and happiness after death.

The secondary scriptures of Hinduism follow the trend of the Upanishads. Both the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* give the picture of a happy and prosperous society. The *Rāmāyaṇa* stresses the Indian ideals of filial piety, female chastity, friendship, loyalty, kingly duties and the courtesy to which inferiors are entitled from superiors. The keynote of the *Mahābhārata* is: "Wherever there is *dharma* there is victory." The message of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* was given in a battle-field where terrible carnage took place. Arjuna was urged by Śrī Kṛishṇa to fight to insure social stability and vindicate *dharma*.

The code of Manu deals with the conduct of an individual as a member of society and points out that the ultimate goal of life is the attainment of *moksha* or liberation. The purpose of the caste system is to promote social harmony, and eliminate competition, and exploitation of the weak by the strong. Respect for women is emphasized though their dependence upon men is admitted. "Where women are respected there the gods dwell."

The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya lays down the duties of Government superintendents and the conduct of warriors. It also speaks of war, invasion, espionage, the plan of a treaty, the life of a saintly king, law, marriage, the source of authority of sovereign states and the nature of political alliances.

The *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* explains the duties of householders. It asks them to cultivate devotion to God, engage in incessant activities surrendering the fruit to God, regard parents as visible representatives of God and respect their wives as though they were their own mothers. A householder must never renounce his wife if she is chaste. When threatened by an enemy he must resist and should never sit in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense about non-resistance. He must act as a hero before his enemies and treat friends with the gentleness of a lamb. It is his duty to struggle to acquire two things: wealth and knowledge. If he does not struggle to acquire wealth he is immoral. By his wealth he can support hundreds of others. The householder is the centre of the life of society. He who struggles to become rich by good means and for righteous purposes will attain salvation like the *yogī* who renounces the world. If a householder dies in battle, fighting for his country and religion, he attains to the same goal as a *yogī* attains through meditation.

A great change came over India when she lost her political freedom to the Moslems in the eleventh century. The alien rule gradually spread all over the country. The Hindus could not absorb the Moslems as they did previous foreign invaders like the Huns, the Scythians and the Śakas. The Moslems came to India with a new religion and a new scripture. It was a proselytising faith quite different from Hinduism in many respects. It disturbed the old concepts of the country. For sheer self-preservation Hindu society became conservative, the caste system stratified, and the social customs rigid. Thanks to the caste system an almost impenetrable wall was created around the Hindu society, and Hinduism did not disintegrate like the ancient cultures of Egypt, Persia and Afghanistan. Even during the 700 years of Moslem rule, Hinduism produced saints like Rāmānuja, Chaitanya, Jñānadeva and Tukārām who not only preserved the spiritual heritage of India but worked to improve the condition of the masses. The present social condition of the Hindus does not reflect the dynamic culture of a thousand years ago. It is a continuation of many social and religious practices adapted during the long period of foreign domination.

The British conquered Bengal in 1757 and ruled India for 150 years—longer than any other colony. England imposed her language upon the Indians and created a band of Indian Civil Servants trained in the English system of administration and education, who admitted the superiority of the Western culture. The new rulers, both native and foreign, were generally unfamiliar with India's spiritual past. During the British rule the country developed hardly any original cultural idea, but the introduction of English education brought the educated Indians into contact with the aggressive and dynamic West. In all fairness it must be admitted that through British historians and Western orientalists and archaeologists, the Indians learned to value their own past cultural achievements. Unfortunately, most of those who received English education became westernized in their outlook. Christian missionaries began to make new converts through means, fair or foul, but also aroused the dormant social conscience of the Hindus. As a result of these various factors there took place in India a new cultural revival with significant social and political implications.

Among the new reform movements dedicated to remove the social abuses and the national stagnation, I would like to mention first the Brāhmo Samāj. It was established in 1828 by Rājā Rāmmohan Roy who is rightly described as the first nationalist leader of India. He was a man of versatile genius. He assimilated Christian ethics, advocated the ideals of the French Revolution, abolished the caste system among his followers, sanctioned widow remarriage, agitated for the removal of early marriage and stressed other social reforms. He was well versed in the teachings of the Upanishads, the Koran, the Tantra and Buddhism. As a reaction against the liberal outlook of the Brāhmo Samāj, Swāmī Dayānanda (1824-1883) established the Ārya Samāj which stood for Hindu orthodoxy and reintroduced Vedic sacrifices. Conscious of the stagnation of Hindu society Swāmī Dayānanda advocated various reforms such as the spread of education, especially among women. A pugnacious Hindu, he wanted to stem the tide of Christianity and Islam. The Rāmakrishṇa Mission was founded in 1897 by Swāmī Vivekānanda who wanted to blend India's ancient spiritual values with the philanthropic, educational and missionary activities of the West. Rāmakrishṇa was not a social reformer. He was a man of God. His teachings, however, gave an impetus to the reformation of Hindu society. He rightly diagnosed that human malady is essentially spiritual and so he exhorted people to realize God and to get rid of ignorance and ego which are the principal causes of lust, greed, selfishness and other vices. He did not explain away the world as unreal like the extreme non-dualists, but regarded it as the manifestation of the Divine *Śakti* or the play of the Divine Mother. His spiritual experiences have an important implication on the human situation of today. He realized that every soul is potentially divine. This divinity of man is the spiritual basis of freedom and democracy. He taught the solidarity of man from direct experience with the implication that by hurting others a man only hurts himself. This is the unshakeable basis of ethics. Having realized the same Godhead by following different disciplines he taught the harmony of religions which is the only effective way of eliminating religious friction. To the last moment of his life he dedicated his whole body and soul to the service of others.

Śrī Rāmakrishṇa taught his foremost disciple Swāmī Vivekānanda to see God with eyes open and not merely with eyes closed in meditation. Vivekānanda further learned from his teacher that the most effective way to worship God is to serve the poor, the illiterate and the sick. Later on this great patriot-saint of India told his fellow countrymen: "You may invent an image through which to worship God but a living image already exists—the living man. You may build a temple to worship God and that may be good, but a better one, a much higher one, already exists—the human body." He laid down three conditions of social reform. Every genuine reformer must feel for others, then he must discover the right way to alleviate human misery, and lastly, he must be totally unselfish in his motive. Swāmī Vivekānanda's heart was bruised to see the pitiable condition of the masses of India. He wrote: "The great national sin of India is the neglect of the masses and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics will be of any avail until the masses of India are once more well educated and well cared for." "The national ideals of India," the great Swāmi repeated time and again, "are renunciation and service. Intensify her through these channels and the rest will take care of itself." He loved India with all his heart and soul and feelingly spoke of her as the playground of boyhood, the pleasure-grove of youth and the sacred Varanasi of old age. He often appeared as "the condensed India"—proud of her past achievements, depressed by her present misery, and optimistic of her future greatness. His love of India was not the idolatry of geography but based upon the appreciation of the great spiritual ideals that were developed in the remote past in this holy land. During the Centennial year of Swāmī Vivekānanda's birth, the whole of India rose to her feet to pay homage to her great patriot-saint.

Social values of Hinduism have been recognized in the caste system, the four stages of life and the four ideals a Hindu seeks to realize. The caste system of India, as formulated in the scriptures, is based on the inborn inequality among human beings. The purpose of the caste system is not to keep down the weak and the powerless but to give them a push to bring out their potent powers. It is a law of spiritual economics and has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. Hierarchy in the caste system as originally conceived is determined by the degree of a man's voluntary renunciation, self-control, intellect and spiritual attainments. The higher a man's position in the caste system, the greater is his obligation to the members of the lower castes. Through the caste system India vindicated the supremacy of spirituality and intellect over military power, wealth and organized labour. As long as India cherishes her spiritual ideals some sort of caste system will exist. The power will be controlled by spiritual and intellectual leaders though they may come from other social groups.

The realistic aspect of Hinduism has been expressed through organization of an individual's life into four stages, with their respective disciplines, ideals, obligations and values, which are all legitimate. Boyhood is to be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, youth to the enjoyment of legitimate pleasures, old age to reflection in retirement and the hour of death to communion with God. During the fourth stage the householder renounces the world and becomes a monk. He rises above the restricted ideas of possession and possessiveness, regards himself as a citizen of the universe and gives assurance of fearlessness to all beings. A monk is the teacher and monitor of his fellow-men. A healthy society, according to Hinduism, should have at its top a few genuine monks who take the vows of renunciation and service.

The affirmative aspect of Hinduism towards life has been emphasized by the recognition of four basic values called *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksha*. *Dharma* stands for the righteous performance of duties, *artha* for wealth, *kāma* for legitimate sense pleasures, and *moksha* for liberation from the prison-house of the world. The first three may be called worldly values which are important. Without them life becomes drab and grey. *Moksha* is the supreme spiritual value. Through the first three one fulfils worldly desires. Even then a man is not completely happy. The spiritual element in him can never be permanently satisfied with worldly achievements, however noble they may be. After going through the entire gamut of worldly pleasures a man still finds inner restlessness which is inevitable as long as he identifies himself with the world. The fourth ideal shows the way to liberation from restricted individuality.

I have tried to explain that Hinduism through its long history has cherished social values. Thus it has tried to create a healthy society in which the individual can develop all his latent spiritual powers. But for the past several centuries social ethics has been neglected. The concept of *dharma* has lost much of its hold upon people. Wealth is not equally distributed. The powerful invoke the law of *karma* to exploit the poor. There is widespread misery in the country because of ignorance, poverty and ill health. The selfish rich are not interested in removing the cause of these ills. As Goldsmith said:

> "Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
> Princes and nobles, they flourish and fade,
> A breath can make them as a breath has made.
> But a bold peasantry, a country's pride,
> Once destroyed can never be supplied."

The precious gems of the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad-Gītā* lie buried, in modern India, in heaps of filth. We need to emphasize social ethics.

Social ethics must lead to the realization of a higher spiritual ideal. Mere going about doing good is not enough. A man often becomes a philanthropist after earning his first million dollars. People engage themselves in social activities to escape the boredom of life, soothe a guilty conscience or acquire power and prestige. Social duties often cripple a man at the highest stage of evolution. Swāmī Vivekānanda once remarked that duty is like the midday sun which scorches the tender plant of spirituality.

Through the observance of social ethics the heart is purified. It gets rid of self-centredness. Now the individual is ready for the practice of subjective or personal ethics of which the main disciplines are: austerity, self-control, renunciation and introspection. He takes the final step for spiritual illumination. A man cannot see God everywhere, which is the ideal of Vedānta, as long as he sees evil and imperfections in the world and struggles against them. Ethics speaks of a life as it *ought* to be lived. Oughtness is the very crux of ethics. An ethical man is constantly assailed by the thought, "I ought to have done this. I ought not to have done that." He engages himself in constant struggle. As the heart becomes purified by the practice of ethical disciplines he begins to see God everywhere and finally through God's grace he becomes enlightened. After illumination he no longer consciously struggles to acquire moral virtues. They adorn him like jewels. The Upanishad says: "Evil does not overtake him, but he transcends evil. He becomes sinless, taintless, free from doubts and a knower of Truth."

An enlightened man is by no means inactive or unconcerned about the welfare of the world. Buddha, Christ, Śaṅkarāchārya, Rāmakrishṇa and other God-men worked incessantly for the lasting benefit of mankind. They did not act under the compulsion of duty or moral oughtness. Their

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In this short speech I have tried to show that Hindu religion and philosophy are neither anti-social nor other-worldly in the usual sense of these words. Hindu thinkers have tried to harmonize realism with idealism. They have always faced the challenge of Reality, the meaning of which, however, changes at different levels of the evolution of the soul. They have reflected deeply upon man's real problems of life from his first wandering into the realm of matter to his ultimate liberation. What they have taught us seems to be: First idealize the real and then realize the ideal.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION IN THE SCIENTIFIC AGE

PROF. A. R. WADIA
Bombay

WITH the advancement of science there is a growing feeling that religion has no scientific basis and therefore becomes an obstacle to progress. Though Vivekananda did a lot for the revival of religion, one cannot be blind to the dark side of religion in the history of humanity. This is necessary in order to get a correct perspective of religion in this age of science. The earliest manifestations of religion were marked by cruel sacrifices not merely of animals but even of human beings. One cannot be sure that these sacrifices do not take place even to-day in some outlying pockets of primitive communities. Another baneful effect of religion has been an attitude of superiority to all other religions, an attitude of being holier-than-thou. Swift with his usual wise cynicism was right when he said that we have enough religion to hate one another, but not enough to love one another. No wonder that in the name of God rivers of blood have flown in all centuries and besmirched the name of God and religion alike. A more subtle defect of historic religions has been the development of a crude orthodoxy which sticks to the letter and kills the spirit of the wisest scriptures. There is the classic example of the observance of Sabbath as a day of rest to be spent in prayer, because God had created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. To work on the Sabbath day was looked upon as a sacrilege and an offence against God. It is said that in ancient Babylonia one day in a week was observed as a day of rest because of the simple economic discovery that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. A periodic rest from the dull routine of life at least for one day in a week has a good deal to be said for it. But it could be a travesty of life if it is exalted into an orthodox dogma that under no circumstances should man work on a Sabbath. There is a charming episode in the life of Christ. When he attended to a sick person on a Sabbath there was a howl that he had committed a sacrilege. Christ with a sublime directness retorted that Sabbath had been made for man and not man for Sabbath.

It is this crude orthodoxy that has made religion an enemy of science. Socrates was the first great victim to be sacrificed to the anger of priests. In the days of the Renaissance Galileo, Kepler, Bruno were all persecuted, because they put the facts of astronomy above the teaching of the Scriptures. Even a hundred years ago Darwin might have paid with his life for his discovery of the theory of evolution and upsetting the whole story of creation. He was saved only because time had worked on behalf of science and the right of the scientists to work free from the trammels of orthodoxy had been definitely established. Half a century more and Einstein came with his theory of relativity which completely revolutionised our conceptions of time and space and the world. But his discoveries were hailed with joy and reverence and though he had to leave his native Germany for political reasons to escape the terrors of Hitler's regime, he was overwhelmed with honours all over the world.

Thus this duel between science and religion has ended in a complete victory for science. But it would be a tragic mistake to read into this victory an all-round defeat of religion. On the contrary the triumph of science has also meant a triumph of religion and its freedom from orthodoxy and fanaticism. Religion has come into its own legitimate heritage. Science has its limitations and the greatest scientists of our day have also been men of religion. Einstein remained true to the faith of his Jewish ancestors. Crompton, a Nobel Laureate in Physics, has functioned as the President of the World Federation of Religions.

It is interesting to note how in our age religion has survived the most sustained attack it has ever had to face. Karl Marx, the Prophet of Communism, in spite of his Jewish heritage, tried to dethrone God and dismissed religion as an opiate of the people. With the Russian Revolution Lenin as the true disciple of Marx abolished religion. Churches were closed or converted into museums. Religious instruction was banned in all educational institutions. Perhaps there was no open persecution of Christians as such, except in so far as they ranged themselves as political opponents of Communism. But there was a subtle propaganda against religion in the form of posters and cartoons that ridiculed priests and ridicule can be as effective, perhaps even more effective, a means of silencing opposition as open persecution. But religion cannot be so easily uprooted from the hearts of men. Russia was traditionally as religious as we Indians are reputed to be and as Europe of the Middle Ages was. Religion slumbered for some time and individual homes became little churches where God could be worshipped on the sly even in the face of children who could betray their parents. Oddly enough, Hitler paved the way for the resurrection of religion in Russia. As his soldiers swept across Russia, they roused the intense patriotism of Russians as in the days of Napoleon. Communists and non-communists forgot their political differences and fought side by side till they threw out Hitler's hordes and drove him to his own destruction. In the hour of victory came a demand from the religious Russians that they should be permitted to offer thanks to God. Stalin found himself in a dilemma. If he acceded to their request he would go against one of the most basic principles of Marxism. If he refused he would be held guilty of ingratitude to those patriots who had risked their lives for the honour of their country. Perhaps due to the training of his mother who had meant him to enter the Church, he yielded and religion came into its own in irreligious Russia. Since then Russia has shown more tolerance, though it has not gone back on its anti-religious policies.

During the last decade we have become familiar with Pasternak's great novel, *Dr. Zhivago*. It brought him the much-coveted Nobel Laureateship but he was not permitted to accept it, and like Socrates he was too wedded to his motherland to seek a voluntary exile. It is a story of the Russian Revolution, a story of innumerable sufferings caused by shortages in food and housing and by political persecutions. In spite of these sufferings Pasternak brought out in a subtle masterly way how faith in God and Christ prevailed and gave strength to the people to bear these sufferings with a courage that only religion can give. *Dr. Zhivago* may not have been published in its original Russian form, but it has become a world classic all over the world. And so the cause of religion has triumphed even in the country which has conquered space with its high scientific and technological knowledge.

Let me linger for a few moments on another realm of victory for religion. Last decades of the nineteenth century were marked by an upsurge of materialism among philosophers. But twentieth century saw a marked swing of the pendulum towards religion. Men who started with science became philosophers of religion. William James, an eminent psychologist and a founder of Pragmatism as a philosophic creed, was also the author of a remarkable great book: *Varieties of Religious Experience*. This was in America. In Germany Eucken figured as the philosopher of religion. In France Bergson, one of the most original geniuses in the history of European thought, started with Biology and ended in the realms of Ethics and Religion. Professed scientists like Einstein and Max Planck have remained men of religion in the truest sense of the word.

We Indians have been fond of describing ourselves as spiritual. We have even been guilty of posing as holier-than-thou when there is no real justification for it. But under the stress and strain of English education many English-educated Indians wavered in their religious faith and became agnostics and even atheists. There was a danger that many enlightened Indians were drifting away from their traditional moorings and might have been lost in a soulless philosophy of materialism. It was at this crucial hour in our cultural history that the genius of Vivekananda came to the rescue of India. He was not blind to the evils of the caste system as based on the philosophy of touch-me-not. He had the courage to proclaim that Hinduism had become the religion of the kitchen. But behind all the palpable degradations of Indian life he could see the Truth of Vedanta, the activitism of the Gita, the universalism of all true religions. It will have to be said to the credit of Shri Ramakrishna that he discovered the truth that religions may be many, but Religion is one. That is why he could be a Hindu, a Christian and a Muslim as well. This truth had to be proclaimed through the stentorian voice of Swami Vivekananda. It pierced the walls of orthodoxy in America. It revived the smouldering embers of Hinduism into a new refulgent flame. Truly was Neo-Hinduism born with Vivekananda and religion has been placed on the solid foundation of the old mixed with the spirit of humanism that has marked Christianity at its best.

In its long history religion has had detractors and opponents but it has survived till our own times. What is the secret of this successful survival? For it has also its own secret. Scientists in every field have become conscious of their limitations. They have come face to face with something mysterious, which has come to be known as the unknown X. Religion is conscious of its own mystery, which it cannot expound in set phrases, but it carries with it its own certainty. GOD IS. This may be shrouded in the folds of mystery but it has been uttered by the mystics of all countries and all ages with confidence. GOD IS. There is something mysterious in the human heart, which responds to Him and He responds to it. The Vedantin, the Buddhist, the Hebrew Prophets, Christians and Muslim Sufis speak in diverse tongues, but the message is the same: GOD IS. None can know Him until and unless he loses himself in Him. The Gita has familiarised us with the three-fold paths in the quest of God. The learned will find Him through knowledge, He can be found through the actions of the righteous, and the devoted in heart can find Him through Bhakti (prayer).

Man may conquer the sky and even reach the Moon in coming years. Even then it will not make nonsense of religion, for religion itself is a part of human nature, it gives strength to our weakness, it makes us akin as children of God, who have the same right to inherit the Kingdom of God.

Our country is looked upon as a secular state under our Constitution. A Pakistani friend described India—a secular state—as irreligious. But this is a travesty of facts. Our secularism is an expression of our tolerance of all religions, not a denial of religion. There is such a thing as Universal Religion, which could be taught to, and accepted by, all Indians. We would be all the better for it. Our moral fibre will be invigorated if young Indians can grow up as God-fearing men and patriotic citizens.

Some of us at times may be tempted to get away from God. In our pride of success we may forget God and even deny Him. But a time comes in the lives of most of us when we rediscover our faith in God and what religion stands for. I am reminded of an English officer in Mysore who delighted in vaunting his atheism and decrying God and religion. Time came when he fell ill and he knew that his days were numbered. In those moments of uncertainty of life something stirred within him and he spoke to the nurse: "Nurse, pray for me." An atheist to pray: for what, to whom ? Was it just a superstition of a dying man or a realisation even at the last moment that death is not the end, not an epilogue, but a recurring prologue in the mysterious cycle of life and death? It is this experience that makes us believe and must make us believe with Browning:

> God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world.

SWĀMĪ VIVEKĀNANDA'S SYNTHESIS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION

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Introductory

The subject of science and religion is getting more and more important to man in the modern age. They are two great disciplines, which, when combined harmoniously, can bring about an all-round expression of human genius. But, unfortunately, for the last few centuries, the relationship between the two has not been quite happy. In the twentieth century, however, a new approach is becoming evident, and the representative thinkers among scientists and religious people are beginning to discern a close interrelation between these two branches of human knowledge. They are slowly veering round to the point of view that science and religion can heartily embrace each other, without detriment to the cause for which each stands, and work for the good of humanity. It is being realized more and more by both that there are elements in science that religion can adopt in order to fortify itself, and elements in religion that can deepen and strengthen science. I shall here touch upon some of these points of contact and discuss the methods and results of both disciplines against the background of the unity and totality of knowledge and in the light of the synthetic approach and vision of Swāmī Vivekānanda who was an outstanding spiritual and intellectual luminary of the modern age and who worked successfully to bring about this great consummation. Writes Romain Rolland about him:

> 'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis Vivekānanda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical....He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'[1]

The Scientific Discipline

The civilization in which we live today is the product of the discipline of the human mind known as science. When we study science at close quarters, in the way the great scientists have applied themselves to this pursuit, we find two aspects in its discipline. The first is *pure science*, science which tries earnestly to understand the truth of experience through a dispassionate inquiry; and the second is *applied science*, in which the truths discovered by pure science flow as inventions for the technical enrichment of human life. These two, science as *lucifera* and science as *fructifera*, science as *light* and science as *fruit*, always go together. Knowledge leads to power, and power leads to control and manipulation of the forces of nature, enabling man deliberately to condition his life and environment. Every new discovery in pure science, at some stage or other, becomes converted into applied science, into control and manipulation of the forces of nature. And the result, as revealed in recent history, is the great saga of scientific discovery and invention resulting in the world-wide technological civilization of today. It is a most fascinating study how the human mind, disciplined in this pursuit of science, develops the capacity to wrest from nature truth after truth, hidden and jealously guarded by her, leading to our extraordinary age of nuclear science and space travel.

Limitations of Science

But, when we go deeper into this subject of science, its limitations become apparent. To illustrate: two branches of science, viz. physics, including astronomy, and biology, have given us a vast body of insights regarding the nature of the universe and man. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, physics was warped in its final judgments. It saw materialism and mechanism reigning supreme in the universe. There was then a cocksureness in its pronouncements; but, in the twentieth century, an element of humility is discernible in the attitude of the great physicists of the age. In the nineteenth century, knowledge was not deep enough, and scientists looked only at the surface of things. But, along with the discovery of such facts as radioactivity and insight into the nucleus of the atom, the realization has come that there is a severe limitation placed on our knowledge regarding the truth of the external world. Science owns today that it deals only with the *appearances* of things and not with the *reality* behind these appearances. Some of the greatest of modern physicists tell us that what science has revealed of the world around us is only the outer aspect of things. Behind this *observable* universe, there is also an *unobservable* universe. This is a great confession of the limitations of science and its methods. Science is dealing with phenomena revealed by the senses or by apparatuses helpful to the senses. But these senses reveal so little, and what they reveal only tell us that there are realities behind the sense world determining it and controlling it. Science restricts itself to the understanding of the observable part of the universe and to controlling its energies for the uses of man.

A similar situation obtains in the science of biology. In the last century, it was cocksure about its pronouncements. By a study of the different aspects of the phenomena of life, it arrived at the great theory of evolution from which it drew certain conclusions, which directly led to a form of materialism that equated man with the animal, and both with a machine. Today, scientists tell us that they were not happy titles that Darwin chose for his famous books *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man.* Sir Julian Huxley suggests that these could have been more appropriately titled *The Evolution of Organisms* and *The Ascent of Man.*[2] But then these books appeared at a time when a fierce controversy was going on between emerging science and the entrenched Christian dogma, and this had its impact even on the choosing of the titles of great scientific books. The science of physics with its thoroughgoing materialism and mechanistic determinism, and the science of biology with its newly discovered evolutionary theory and its domination by the general materialistic outlook of science and scientists of the age, helped to shatter nineteenth century man's faith in religion and spiritual values.

Limitations of Dogma-bound Religion

Added to this was the attack on religion from the great social idealists and revolutionary social thinkers like Karl Marx. It was the period of the industrial revolution. These idealists asked: If God is there in an extra-cosmic heaven, why is there so much suffering in this world, why are millions starving, and why are thousands of little children made to slave in factories and workshops for the gain of a few capitalist exploiters ? This kind of inequality, this kind of oppression of man by man in the presence of an all-powerful God, is something we cannot understand or bear. Marx accordingly characterized religion as the 'soul of soulless conditions, the heart of a heartless world, the opium of the people'.

The result was that, by the end of the nineteenth century, religion and faith in God and eternal verities ceased to be the ruling ideas of modern civilization; the power of religion to influence human thinking and conduct disappeared; man lost the fear of God, and more especially the fear of the devil ! Religious dogma had upheld the latter more than the former as conducive to moral control of human action and belief. But the scientific spirit shattered faith in the devil and, along with it, faith in God as well. These were treated as primitive superstitions unworthy of modern civilized man. Modern science treated religion as a dangerous error in the beginning and as a harmless illusion in the end.

But the two great world wars, and the various crises, economic and political, that followed the one and preceded the other in this twentieth century, brought about a certain chastening of the spirit of western thinkers, especially of those in the scientifically advanced countries of the West. Social thinkers became less and less cocksure of their remedies for human ills. Even great scientists began to feel and express that science, as understood and pursued by them, was not enough. Einstein said: 'Science can de-nature plutonium; but it cannot de-nature the evil in the heart of man.' That is not its function. Most scientists agree today that science alone cannot ensure human happiness; it can only create *conditions* for his happiness; but it cannot ensure that man *shall be* happy or man *shall be* really fulfilled. That is not the function of science as understood in the positive sciences of physics, biology, etc; it is the province of another discipline, the science of the inner nature of man, which is the true meaning of religion as understood in Indian thought.

Religion and Science in the Vedantic Perspective

Modern civilization has overrated science and technology just as the older civilizations had underrated it. There is need today to view science in perspective—the perspective of total human knowledge and welfare. This is one of the several vital contributions of Vivekānanda to modern thought. Dealing with the complementary character of eastern contributions to religion and western contributions to science, he said in a lecture on 'My Master' delivered in New York in 1896:

'Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The present adjustment will be the harmonizing, the mingling of these two ideals. To the oriental, the world of spirit is as real as to the occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the oriental finds everything he wants or hopes for; in it he finds all that makes life real to him. To the occidental he is a dreamer; to the oriental the occidental is a dreamer playing with ephemeral toys, and he laughs to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later. Each calls the other a dreamer. But the oriental ideal is as necessary for the progress of the human race as is the occidental, and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind happy and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe this will claim that happiness is in the machine; but it is always in the mind. That man alone who is the lord of his mind can become happy, and none else. And what, after all, is this power of machinery ? Why should a man who can send a current of electricity through a wire be called a very great man and a very intelligent man ? Does not nature do a million times more than that every moment ? Why not then fall down and worship nature ?'[3]

The Spiritual Urges in Modern Science

The universe was a mystery to man in the primitive stage; it has not ceased to be so for civilized man even in this twentieth century. We find scientists like the late Sir James Jeans writing books on the scientific view of the universe with such titles as *The Mysterious Universe*. Even after all these marvellous scientific discoveries and inventions, the scientist still treats nature as profoundly mysterious. In spite of all the knowledge that he has gained, the scientist feels that he has only scratched the surface of nature, that he is yet far far away from the heart of the problem of the universe. Says Sir James Jeans in his *New Background of Science*:

'Physical science set out to study a world of matter and radiation, and finds that it cannot describe or picture the nature of either, even to itself. Photons, electrons and protons have become about as meaningless to the physicist as x, y, z are to a child on its first day of learning algebra The most we hope for at the moment is to discover ways of manipulating x, y, z without knowing what they are, with the result that the advance of knowledge is at present reduced to what Einstein has described as extracting one incomprehensible from another incomprehensible.'[4]

If the mystery of the universe has eluded the scientist so much, the mystery of man has eluded him even more. The late Sir Arthur Eddington, the famous mathematician and physicist, concludes his book, *Space, Time and Gravitation*, with a pointed reference to this predicament:

'The theory of relativity has passed in review the whole subject-matter of physics. It has unified the great laws, which by the precision of their formulation and the exactness of their application have won the proud place in human knowledge which physical science holds today. And yet, in regard to the nature of things, this knowledge is only an empty shell—a form of symbols. It is knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the methods of physics. And, moreover, we have found that where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from nature that which the mind has put into nature. We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origin. At last we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo ! it is our own.'[5]

Man as thinker, man as observer, man as the self has left his 'footprints on the shores of the unknown', on the shores of the not-self aspects of the universe. It is time that science tried to unravel this remarkable mystery of man. There seems to be a profounder mystery hidden within it than in the depths of outer space or of the atom. It is time that science turned its attention to tackling this mystery. All other mysteries pale into insignificance by the side of this one; it holds the key to all other mysteries.

In a talk over the B.B.C. a few decades ago, Eddington posed this great question: 'What is the truth about ourselves ?', and proceeded to answer: 'We may incline to various answers: We are a bit of star gone wrong. We are complicated physical machinery—puppets that strut and talk and laugh and die as the hand of time turns the handle beneath. But let us remember that there is one elementary inescapable answer: We are that which asks the question.'

We are that which asks the question. Man is primarily a subject; man cannot be reduced to objective dimensions. He is essentially the seer, the knower, the observer; he is the *dṛk* or *sākṣi* or *kṣetrajña*, in the language of Vedānta. Here Eddington throws a hint, 'of aspects deep in the world of physics, but unattainable by the methods of physics', but containing tremendous philosophical possibilities for advancing man's knowledge of himself and of the universe; this is obviously outside the pale of investigation by the positive sciences and their methods.

Another scientist, the late Prince Louis de Broglie, an authority on quantum theory and wave mechanics, dealt with the same subject in an article on 'The Poetry of Science' contributed some years ago to the international monthly *Mirror*. Starting with a famous quotation from Blaise Pascal:

'In space, the universe engulfs me and reduces me to a pin-point; through thought I understand the universe',

De Broglie concludes:

'In that sublime pun lies the beauty, the poetry of pure science, and its high intellectual worth.'

What am I ? Physically I am a speck of microscopic dust in the vast immensity of the universe. But *through thought I comprehend this universe.* Man as scientist comprehends, in a small formula given by his thought, the vast phenomena of nature, with its immensity and variety. What must be the profound mystery of man who, in one aspect, is only a pin-point engulfed by the spatial immensity of the universe, but yet, in another aspect, is able to compress the whole of that immensity into a few formulae given by the power and penetration of his thought !

The Mystery That Is Man

So man has dimensions that cannot be reduced to the merely physical, the merely material. These latter are his not-self aspects which enter into the constitution of his body which obviously is just a speck of dust in that vast world of the not-self; but there is in him also something transcendental, which cannot be so reduced. He is the self; that is his primary, inalienable aspect. And if science is to progress further, it has to choose for investigation this field of the mystery of man which towers over its erstwhile study, namely, the mystery of the external universe. This is a vast field of study—the field of man's awareness, the field of his consciousness, his ego, his being the *subject* and not the *object*; science will find here a vaster and more fascinating and rewarding field of study than in external nature. Already scientists in the West are slowly turning their attention to this great mystery, the mystery of 'Man the Unknown' in the words of Alexis Carrel, apart from that of 'Man the Known', which is the subject of the positive sciences like physics, chemistry and biology and behaviouristic psychology.

Man is the creator of science and technology, culture and civilization; he is also today the only possible destroyer of his civilization. Everything about him is a mystery. In the words of Lincoln Barnett in his study of Einstein's contributions to modern scientific thought:

'In the evolution of scientific thought, one fact has become impressively clear: there is no mystery of the physical world which does not point to a mystery beyond itself. All highroads of the intellect, all byways of theory and conjecture lead ultimately to an abyss that human ingenuity can never span. For man is enchained by the very condition of his being, his finiteness and involvement in nature. The further he extends his horizons, the more vividly he recognizes the fact that, as the physicist Niels Bohr puts it, "We are both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence". Man is thus his own greatest mystery. He does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself. He comprehends but little of his organic processes and even less of his unique capacity to perceive the world around him, to reason and to dream. Least of all does he understand his noblest and most mysterious faculty: the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in the act of perception.'[6]

The Scientific Basis of Religion

Here is the meeting point of science and religion, as revealed by Indian thought; for religion, as expounded in Vedānta, takes up the investigation of the mystery of experience where the positive sciences leave off. This 'Man the Unknown', man as the *subject* of experience, is its special field of investigation. Says Swāmī Vivekānanda:

'Beyond consciousness is where the bold search. Consciousness is bound by the senses. Beyond that, beyond the senses, men must go, in order to arrive at truths of the spiritual world, and there are even now persons who succeed in going beyond the bounds of the senses. These are called *ṛṣis* (seers of thought), because they come face to face with spiritual truths.'[7]

Indian thought upholds both religion and science as valid disciplines in the pursuit of truth. India endorses the view expressed by Eddington about the spiritual kinship of science and religion:

'You can understand the true spirit neither of science nor of religion unless seeking is placed in the forefront.'[8]

India's thinkers never saw any contradiction between the two, unlike the scientists and theologians of the West. Such contradiction and conflict are the result of a narrow view of both science and religion which, however, the modern West is struggling to discard. Many students of science, not to speak of laymen, have vague and rather confused notions about what science means. The same is true about religion. To the ordinary man, science means no more than gadgets like radio or television, or other material benefits conferred on mankind by scientific technology. Students of science generally identify it with the several departments of science such as physics, chemistry, etc., which they study in schools and colleges. But we have to turn to the great scientists themselves to learn what science is; and from them we learn that it is the pursuit of truth—of truth hidden in the facts of nature, in the data revealed by the senses and the data revealed by experiments. It is a sincere, critical, detached study of experience, by which confused data are reduced to meaning and orderliness and brought under control. Says Karl Pearson:

'The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance, is the function of science, and the habit of forming a judgement upon these facts, unbiased by personal feeling is characteristic of what may be termed the scientific frame of mind.'[9]

Science so understood is not tied up with any particular body of facts. In the words of one of the great biologists, J. Arthur Thomson:

'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterized as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry; it is simply sincere critical thought, which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. We may get a good lesson in scientific method from a businessman meeting some new practical problem, from a lawyer sifting evidence, or from a statesman framing a constructive bill.'[10]

Objectivity and precision, both as to thought and verbal formulation, are the two important characteristics of the scientific method. Any study possessing these characteristics will be science, whatever be the field of that study. Science as such is therefore not tied down to any particular order of facts, though the various departments of science like physics or chemistry, biology or sociology, are tied down to particular orders of facts. These departments have limited scope, but science itself is *unlimited* in scope; and these various departments starting with the study of separate fields tend, in their advanced stages, to overstep their particular boundaries and merge into one converging scientific search, the search for the meaning of total experience. In this expansive context, the idea of a science of religion, the science of the facts of the inner world of man, as upheld in ancient Indian thought and, as expounded in the modern age by Swāmī Vivekānanda, becomes a study of far-reaching significance.

Religion as developed and understood in the West was, in its aims and methods and data, opposed to this spirit of rational seeking and investigation. It was taken as something finished and ready-made, which men were asked to believe—a creed or a dogma, a frozen piece of thought, which men were called upon to accept. That was why it came into fierce collision with the advancing tide of science with its spirit of seeking and rational inquiry. In India, on the other hand, religion has always been understood to be a matter of seeking, finding, and verification, as any of the branches of science. This is a statement that will be found corroborated in the great Upaniṣads of ancient India and in the literature of Swāmī Vivekānanda of our own times.

Tracing the recurring conflicts of science and religion in the West to the absence of this broad approach, Vivekānanda said:

'We all know the theories of the cosmos according to the modern astronomers and physicists, and at the same time we all know how woefully they undermine the theology of Europe; how these scientific discoveries that are made act as a bomb thrown at its stronghold; and we know how theologians have in all times attempted to put down these researches.'[11]

When religion refuses to take the help of reason it weakens itself. Alluding to this in the course of a lecture on 'Reason and Religion' delivered in England in 1896, Swāmī Vivekānanda said:

'The foundations have been all undermined, and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe". Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him. There are, of course, a number of people who seem to acquiesce in the so-called popular faith, but we also know for certain that they do not think. Their idea of belief may be better translated as "not-thinking-carelessness".'[12]

And pleading for the application of reason in the field of religion, he continued:

'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific—as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry—but will have greater strength because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.'[13]

A study of the Upaniṣads reveals that the subject of religion was approached in ancient India in an objective dispassionate manner; the aim of the study was to get at truth and not to hug pleasing fancies and illusions or to idolize tribal passions and prejudices.

In several of his lectures and discourses Swāmī Vivekānanda has expounded the scientific approach to religion as upheld in Indian thought. In his lecture on 'Religion and Science', he says:

'Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law....

'Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion because he too reads the wrong book—the book without.'[14]

The Indian thinkers discovered by their investigations that there are two fields in which man functions: one, the external field, the other, the internal. These are two different orders of phenomena. The study of one alone does not exhaust the whole range of experience. Also, the study of one from the standpoint of the other will not lead to satisfactory results. But the study of one in the light of the conclusions from the study of the other is helpful and relevant.

In a lecture on 'Cosmology' Swāmī Vivekānanda said:

'There are two worlds, the microcosm and the macrocosm, the internal and the external. We get truth from both of these by means of experience. The truth gathered from internal experience is psychology, metaphysics and religion; from external experience, the physical sciences. Now a perfect truth should be in harmony with experiences in both these worlds. The microcosm must bear testimony to the macrocosm, and the macrocosm to the microcosm; physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world, and the internal world must have its verification outside.'[15]

Thus the thinkers of ancient India said: Here is the physical life of man, and here is the physical universe that environs him. Let us study both in a scientific spirit. But let us also study him in his depths, his nature as revealed by his consciousness, his awareness, his emotions, his ego and his sense of seflhood. These latter also constitute a vast group of phenomena that need to be investigated. Every advance in this field is bound to advance also man's knowledge as to the truth of the mystery of the external world. For, to quote Eddington again:

'We have discovered that it is actually an aid in the search for knowledge to understand the nature of the knowledge which we seek.'[16]

The method of investigation in the field of religion is largely the same as in the positive sciences: collection of facts, their classification, a dispassionate study of these so as to reveal the law or laws underlying them, such knowledge to lead to control over the phenomena concerned, and finally, the application of such knowledge for the alleviation of human suffering and the enhancement and enrichment of human life. This kind of study of religion, as a thorough scientific study of the facts of the inner life, was undertaken by the great thinkers of ancient India; the insights which they gained were re-tested and amplified by a galaxy of subsequent thinkers, leaving to posterity the invaluable legacy of a rich and dynamic scientific tradition in the field of religion. It is because of this adamantine base that Indian spirituality has stood the test of time. That also explains its hospitality to modern science, and its pride in the remarkable achievements of this sister discipline developed by the modern West.

'The true Vedāntic spirit', says Romain Rolland, 'does not start out with a system of preconceived ideas. It possesses absolute liberty and unrivalled courage among religions with regard to the facts to be observed and the diverse hypotheses it has laid down for their co-ordination. Never having been hampered by a priestly order, each man has been entirely free to search wherever he pleased for the spiritual explanation of the spectacle of the universe.'[17]

After a thorough investigation into the real nature of man, the sages of the Upaniṣads made a fundamental discovery: Man, in his essential nature, is divine; behind the finite man is the Ātman, ever free, ever pure, and perfect. The body, the mind, and the ego are merely the externals of the real man who is immortal and divine. This discovery led to the further discovery that the same divinity is the ground of the world as well. This they termed Brahman, the totality of the Self and the not-Self, which they characterized as *satyaṁ jñānam anantam*—'Truth, Awareness, and Infinity'. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, we find this question put by an earnest student to a great teacher:

Kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati—'What is that reality, O Blessed One, by knowing which we can know all that there is in the universe ?'[18]

Is there such a unique reality by knowing which we can understand all the manifestations of nature, internal as well as external ? Is there a unity behind this diversity, a one behind the many ? To this question, the teacher gave a very significant reply:

Dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yat Brahmavido vadanti parā caiva aparā ca—

'Two are the types of knowledge to be acquired by man; so say the knowers of Brahman. One is called *parāvidyā*, higher knowledge; the other is called *aparāvidyā*, lower knowledge.'[19]

Both these must be investigated. Of these, the lower or ordinary knowledge, continues the Upaniṣad, consists of the sacred Vedas, phonetics, the code of rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody, and astronomy. In fact, it includes all the sacred books, literature, art, history, and science.

Here we have a scientific mind of the highest order—impersonal, objective, and detached. There is no desire to put forth a pet opinion; truth alone is the motive power, even if that truth goes against one's pet attachments and aversions. The teacher says that even the Vedas, the sacred books of the people, belong to the category of lower knowledge. Who would dare say that his own sacred books are ordinary, except he who is of a detached and scientific frame of mind, and is in search of truth and not dogma; he who has no truth to hide, no opinion to uphold, no prejudices to defend; who just wants to know the truth and is prepared to sacrifice everything else into the bargain? No religion except the Vedānta has practised this bold detachment. The follower of every other religion, if asked what is ordinary knowledge, would unhesitatingly reply: 'All the sacred books of all the religions except my own' ! But this teacher of the Upaniṣads had the detachment and boldness, proceeding from love of truth, to say that even the Vedas, held in such veneration by himself and by his people, were secondary; all the sacred books and all positive sciences and arts are but lower knowledge—*aparāvidyā*.

What then is left to be included in the category of *parāvidyā*, higher knowledge ? The teacher proceeds to indicate this elusive theme. There is a tremendous field of knowledge still left, he thinks; but it belongs to a different order. So he says:

Atha parā yayā tat akṣaraṁ adhigamyate—

'That is *parā* by which the Imperishable is realized.'[20]

Science and all the rest deal only with things that change, that are perishable. As Eddington puts it: science gives us 'knowledge of structural form and not knowledge of content'. The sacred books give us, says Śrī Rāmakrishna, only *information* about God and not God Himself. And yet we feel that, in the words of Eddington, 'all through the physical universe runs that unknown content'. What is that content ? And how can we get at it ? If the positive sciences cannot get at it, there must be another discipline, another line of inquiry, which must be able to give us this.

If the sacred books contain only *information* about God, there must be a discipline which gives us God and not merely *information* about Him. It is this inquiry that pervades the Upaniṣads and that has made them immortal even as literature. And the nature and scope of that inquiry, and the way it was conducted, have something superb about them. There is no effort to uphold an opinion, however dear; no struggle to pronounce a dogma and cling to it, and thrust it upon others; no trace of tiredness or laziness of mind seeking a resting place on the way. Truth, and nothing but truth, is the watchword. Suffused with the spirit of truth they declared:

Satyameva jayate na anṛtam
Satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ—

'Truth alone triumphs; not untruth; the path to the highest excellence is spread out through truth only.'[21]

And this path to the highest excellence is strewn with the debris of discarded opinions, pleasing dogmas and broken hypotheses; thought was not allowed to rest on any of them for long; it forged ahead on the two wings of critical discrimination and inner detachment, wafted by the current of a single-minded passion for truth. One thinker puts forth his conclusion; another shows it as inadequate; this leads to further inquiry, leading to a deeper pronouncement. There was this graceful conflict of thought between the most gifted minds, through which thought forged ahead. There was no national dogma or authoritarian church to suppress or arrest it. The whole process reached its consummation in the profound discovery of the Imperishable Self of man, the Ātman, and its unity with the Self of the Universe, the Brahman. The entire process was a joyous voyage of discovery; looking back they saw that the steps left behind were also valid and that man travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher.

Modern Science and the Mystery of Man

Pleading for the viewing of man in his depths on the part of modern science, the eminent palaeontologist, the late Père Teilhard de Chardin says:

'When studied narrowly in himself by anthropologists or jurists, man is a tiny, even a shrinking, creature. His over-pronounced individuality conceals from our eyes the whole to which he belongs; as we look at him our minds incline to break nature up into pieces and to forget both its deep interrelations and its measureless horizons: We incline to all that is bad in anthropocentrism. And it is this that leads scientists to refuse to consider man as an object of scientific scrutiny except through his body.

'The time has come to realize that an interpretation of the universe—even a positivist one—remains unsatisfying unless it covers the interior as well as the exterior of things; mind as well as matter. The true physics is that which will, one day, achieve the inclusion of man in his wholeness in a coherent picture of the world.'[22]

The Upaniṣads discovered the finite man as but the outer crust or layer of the infinite and immortal man within. In his finiteness he enters and is entered into by the finite world around him. In this he is a speck of dust in the vast immensity of space in which 'the universe engulfs me and reduces me to a pin-point', in the profound words of Pascal. But in his infinite dimension as the Imperishable Self, he *understands the universe*. The inner aspect of man and, through him, of the universe is slowly dawning on modern scientific thought. Chardin asks:

'Up to now has science ever troubled to look at the world other than from without ?'[23]

And proceeds:

'In the eyes of the physicist, nothing exists legitimately, at least up to now, except the *without* of things. The same intellectual attitude is still permissible in the bacteriologist, whose cultures (apart from substantial difficulties) are treated as laboratory reagents. But it is still more difficult in the realm of plants. It tends to become a gamble in the case of a biologist studying the behaviour of insects or coelenterates. It seems merely futile with regard to the vertebrates. Finally, it breaks down completely with man, in whom the existence of a *within* can no longer be evaded, because it is the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge.'[24]

And Chardin concludes:

'It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an "interior" appears at the heart of beings, as it were seen through a rent. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree or another, this "interior" should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself, there is necessarily a *double aspect to its structure*, that is to say, in every region of space and time—in the same way, for instance, as it is granular: *co-extensive with their Without, there is a Within to things.*'[25]

Says the great physiologist and neurologist, Sir Charles Sherrington:

'Today Nature looms larger than ever and includes more fully than ever ourselves. It is, if you will, a machine, but it is a partly mentalized machine and in virtue of including ourselves it is a machine with human qualities of mind. It is a running stream of energy—mental and physical—and unlike man-made machines it is actuated by emotions, fears and hopes, dislikes and love.'[26]

In a lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', delivered in 1959 at the closing session of the Chicago University symposium on 'Evolution after Darwin' held to commemorate the centenary of the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Sir Julian Huxley, the noted biologist, gave a spiritual orientation to the evolutionary process:

'Man's evolution is not biological but psychosocial; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.

'All dominant thought organizations are concerned with the ultimate, as well as with the immediate, problems of existence or, I should rather say, with the most ultimate problems that the thought of the time is capable of formulating or even envisaging. They are all concerned with giving some interpretation of man, of the world which he is to live in, and of his place and role in that world—in other words some comprehensive picture of human destiny and significance.'[27]

Further, Huxley revealed the trend of evolution towards quality:

'It (evolutionary vision) shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'[28]

In his essay on 'Emergence of Darwinism', Huxley sums up the goal of the evolutionary process at the human level as 'fulfilment':

'In the light of our present knowledge man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by the human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'[29]

And pleading for the development of a science of human possibilities, Huxley further says:

'Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psychosocial evolution that lies ahead.'[30]

Kinship between Vedanta and Modern Science

Swāmī Vivekānanda has shown that Vedānta and modern science are close to each other in spirit and temper and objectives. Both are spiritual disciplines. Even in the cosmology of the physical universe, the two reveal many points of contact. The fundamental position in the cosmology of both is what Swāmī Vivekānanda calls 'the postulate of a self-evolving cause.' Vedānta calls it Brahman which is a universal spiritual principle.

The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* defines Brahman in a majestic utterance which will be welcomed by every scientific thinker:

Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante; yena jātāni jīvanti; yat prayanti abhisaṁviśanti; tat vijijñāsasva; tat Brahmeti—

'Wherefrom all these beings are born; by which, being born, they abide; into which, at the time of dissolution, they enter—seek to know That; That is Brahman.'[31]

To the modern scientist, it is a material reality, the background material or stuff, as astrophysicist Fred Hoyle terms it. And both uphold the theory of evolution, cosmic as well as organic.

Referring to this spiritual kinship between modern science and ancient Vedānta, Swāmī Vivekānanda said in his speech at the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893:

'Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light, from the latest conclusions of science.'[32]

Although modern scientific thought does not yet have a recognized place for any spiritual reality or principle, several scientists of the twentieth century, including biologists like Teilhard de Chardin and Sir Julian Huxley, have endeavoured to soften the materialism of physical science and to find a place for spiritual experience in the scientific world picture. Even in the last century Thomas Huxley, collaborator of Darwin, had protested against the association of science with any fixed dogma such as materialism, and termed materialism an 'intruder'.[33] In this century, this protest has come from great physicists themselves. Sir James Jeans found that the final picture of the universe emerging from twentieth century physical science was one in which matter was completely eliminated, 'mind reigning supreme and alone'.[34] Astrophysicist R. A. Millikan considered materialism 'a philosophy of unintelligence'.[35] If twentieth century physics is thus turning its face away from thoroughgoing materialism, twentieth century biology is one step ahead of it in this orientation. *The whole of modern scientific thought is in the throes of a silent spiritual revolution* with the emergence, on the scientific thought horizon, of mind and consciousness, and the consequent need to develop what Jeans calls 'a new background of science'. Julian Huxley and Chardin find the spiritual character of the world-stuff successively revealed in the course of organic evolution; biology in its theory of evolution, they hold, reveals what Chardin calls a *within* of nature over and above and different from the *without* of nature revealed by physics and astronomy. Vedānta terms the *within* as the *pratyak rūpa* and the *without* as the *parāk rūpa* of nature.

When the significance of this *within* of things is recognized in modern science, the scientific background material will undergo a spiritual orientation and thus come closer to the Brahman of the Vedānta. The synthesis of the knowledge of the *within* and the *without* is what India achieved in its Vedānta ages ago as *samyak jñāna*, complete knowledge or philosophy. Reality itself does not know any distinction between a *within* and a *without*. These distinctions are made only by the human mind for convenience of study and research.

As the different branches of the positive sciences are but different approaches to the study of one and the same reality, and as all such branches of study, when pursued far enough, tend to mingle and merge into a grand science of the physical universe, into a unified science of the *without* of nature, even so, the science of the *within* and the science of the *without* mingle and merge in a science of Brahman, the Total Reality. This is how Vedānta viewed its *Brahmavidyā*, science of Brahman, the term Brahman standing for the totality of Reality, physical and non-physical; the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* defined *Brahmavidyā* as *sarvavidyāpratiṣṭha*, the *pratiṣṭha* or basis of every *vidyā* or science.[36] Says Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*:

Kṣetrakṣetrajñayor jñānaṁ yat tat jñānaṁ mataṁ mama—

'The knowledge of *kṣetra*, the not-self (the without of things), and *kṣetrajña*, the Self (the within of things), is true knowledge according to me.'[37]

Dealing with the all-inclusiveness of this Vedāntic thought as expounded by Swāmī Vivekānanda, Romain Rolland says:

'But it is a matter of indifference to the calm pride of him who deems himself the stronger whether Science accepts free Religion, in Vivekānanda's sense of the term, or not: for his Religion accepts Science. It is vast enough to find a place at its table for all loyal seekers after truth.'[38]

In his lecture on 'The Absolute and Manifestation' delivered in London in 1896, Swāmī Vivekānanda said:

'Do you not see whither science is tending ? The Hindu nation proceeded through the study of the mind, through metaphysics and logic. The European nations start from external nature, and now they too are coming to the same results. We find that searching through the mind we at last come to that Oneness, that Universal One, the Internal Soul of everything, the Essence, the Reality of everything.... Through material science we come to the same Oneness.'[39]

The *Bhāgavata* refers to this complementary character of science and Vedānta in a profound utterance:

Prāyeṇa manujā loke lokatattvavicakṣaṇāḥ;
Samuddharanti hyātmānam ātmanaivāśubhāśayāt.
Ātmano gururātmaiva puruṣasya viśeṣataḥ;
Yat pratyakṣānumānābhyāṁ śreyo'sau anuvindate.

Puruṣatve ca māṁ dhīrāḥ sāṅkhyayogaviśāradāḥ;
Āvistarāṁ prapaśyanti sarvaśaktyupabṛṁhitam—

'In the world, men who are efficient in the investigation of the truth of nature generally uplift themselves by themselves from all sources of evil.

'For a human being, particularly, his *guru* (teacher) is his own self; because he achieves his welfare through (inquiring into) direct sense experience, and inference based on the same.

'In this very human personality also, wise men who have mastered the science and art of the spiritual life clearly realize Me (God, the Universal Self of all) as fully manifest, and endowed with all powers.'[40]

Vedantic View of Evolution

The Vedānta views the entire evolutionary process as progressive evolution of structure and form, and greater and greater manifestation of the Infinite Self within. It is evolution of matter and manifestation of spirit. Twentieth century biology recognizes, in the first appearance of living organisms, the emergence, in a rudimentary form, of the spiritual value of awareness.

This spiritual value of awareness grows, as it were, in richness and variety as we move up the evolutionary ladder. The evolution of the nervous system discloses a progressive development of awareness in depth and range, and a consequent increase in the grip of the organism on its environment.

This awareness achieves a new and significant dimension with the appearance of man on the evolutionary scene. The field of awareness of all other organisms is, largely, the external environment and also, to a small extent, the interior of their bodies—the *without* of nature. Man alone has awareness of the self, along with awareness of the not-self, of both the *within* and *without* of nature.

That is the uniqueness of man, according to both twentieth century biology and ancient Vedānta. Self-awareness, which nature achieved through the evolution of the human organism, is a new dimension of awareness containing tremendous implications for man's destiny as much as for his philosophy of nature.

The Vedāntic view of evolution and of man's uniqueness finds a classic statement in the *Bhāgavata:*

Sṛṣṭvā purāṇi vividhānyajayātmaśaktyā
Vṛkṣān sarī·ṛpapaśūn khagadaṁśamatsyān;
Taistaiḥ atuṣṭahṛdayaḥ puruṣaṁ vidhāya
Brahmāvalokadhiṣaṇaṁ mudam āpa devaḥ—

'The Divine One, having projected (evolved) with His own inherent power various forms such as trees, reptiles, cattle, birds, insects, and fish, was not satisfied at heart with forms such as these; He then projected the human form endowed with the capacity to realize Brahman (the Universal Divine Self of all), and became extremely pleased.'[41]

India's Urge: Realization and Not Mere Speculation

Evolution has revealed that the mystery of existence stirs in man as the mystery of the self. The mystery of the universe will ever remain a mystery until this mystery of the self is cleared. Till then all our conclusions about the truth of the universe proceeding from science or philosophy, theology or logic will be speculative ventures yielding mere postulates and conjectures. The Indian mind was not content to remain at the stage of speculation or conjecture in so important a field as the knowledge of ultimate truth. Her thinkers boldly penetrated into the world within, taking the facts of awareness and the ego as the clue, as *footprints*, in the words of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*;[42] and when they penetrated to the depth, they discovered the infinite and the eternal behind the finite and the time-bound. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* registerd this approach, and the object of its search, in another significant passage:

Yat sākṣāt aparokṣāt Brahma ya ātmā sarvāntaraḥ—

'The Brahman that is immediate and direct—the Self that is *within* all.'[43]

'That art Thou'—*Tat tvam asi*—proclaim the Upaniṣads.[44] Again and again the Upaniṣads reiterate this great Truth. If man as scientist has such a profound dimension that he can comprehend the vast universe in a formula given by his thought, what must be the dimension of man as the Ātman, the unchangeable, infinite Self ! The mystery of the universe was finally resolved through the discovery of the solution to the mystery within man himself. The sages of the Upaniṣads discovered the centre of the universe in the heart of man. Through that discovery man was revealed in his infinite dimension; and the universe was also revealed in all its spiritual glory. Realization of this truth is the only way to life fulfilment, say the Upaniṣads. Says the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad:*

Yadātmatattvena tu Brahmatattvam
Dīpopameneha yuktaḥ prapaśyet;
Ajaṁ dhruvaṁ sarvatattvaiḥ viśuddham
Jñātvā devaṁ mucyate sarvapāpaiḥ—

'When the self-controlled spiritual aspirant realizes in this very body the truth of Brahman (Absolute Existence) through the truth of the Ātman (Self), self-luminous as light, then, knowing the Divinity which is unborn, eternal, and untouched by the modifications of nature, he is freed from all sins.'[45]

This was a profound, joyous discovery as can be seen even from the language in which it is couched in the Upaniṣads. In reaching the ultimate Truth of the Ātman, they had reached also the ultimate of knowledge and awareness, peace and joy. Hence they communicated their discovery as the discovery of the inexhaustible mine of *Satyam* (Truth), *Jñānam* (Awareness), and *Anantam* (Infinitude), or of *Sat* (Existence), *Cit* (Knowledge), and *Ānanda* (Bliss). In the struggle to realize this truth and the life fulfilment it involves, they saw the true meaning of the entire course of cosmic evolution, especially of human evolution.

The organism seeks fulfilment; that is the end and aim of all its activities and processes, says modern biology. In the Upaniṣads, we have the beautiful concepts of *mukti*, freedom, and *pūrṇatā*, fullness. We are bound now; we want to become integral; we must experience fullness. Jesus Christ calls it 'perfection'. 'Be ye, therefore, perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'[46] To experience the delight of freedom, to enlarge the bounds of man's awareness, to get *bodhi*, complete enlightenment, as Buddha expressed it, is the great aim of human evolution. Education, science, culture, socio-political processes and religion are meant to increase and enlarge the bounds of this awareness and the range and depth of this fulfilment, by increasing man's knowledge of and control over not only the outside world but also the deep recesses within him. Knowledge is power in the positive sciences; it is still more so in the science of religion, the science of the inner nature of man, where the power that is gained is not only greater in terms of quantity but also higher in terms of quality.

While living as a prisoner in St. Helena, Napoleon made this significant confession:

'There are in the world two powers—the sword and the spirit. The spirit has always vanquished the sword.

'Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I founded great empires. But upon what did the creation of our genius depend ? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love, and to this very day, millions would die for him.'

Vivekananda and a Science of Human Possibilities

India developed religion as a science, as what Julian Huxley calls 'a science of human possibilities'. In this connection, I can do no better than quote a significant passage from Swāmī Vivekānanda; though rather long, it is worth quoting in full in view of its relevance.

In his speech on 'The Powers of the Mind' delivered in Los Angeles, California, on January 8, 1900, Swāmī Vivekānanda said:

'Now, I shall tell you a theory, which I will not argue now, but simply place before you the conclusion. Each man in his childhood runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few years. The child is first the old savage man, and he crushes a butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive ancestors of his race. As he grows, he passes through different stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race; or take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals, as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving. Let us call it prefection.

'Some men and women are born who anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human race has attained to that perfection, they, as it were, rush through them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can hasten these processes, if we be true to ourselves. If a number of men, without any culture, be left to live upon an island, and are given barely enough food, clothing, and shelter, they will gradually go on and on, evolving higher and higher stages of civilization. We know, also, that this growth can be hastened by additional means.

'We help the growth of trees, do we not ? Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time; we help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the growth of things by artificial means. Why cannot we hasten the growth of man ? We can do that as a race. Why are teachers sent to other countries ? Because by these means we can hasten the growth of races. Now, can we not hasten the growth of individuals ? We can. Can we put a limit to the hastening ? We cannot say how much a man can grow in one life. You have no reason to say that this much a man can do and no more. Circumstances can hasten him wonderfully. Can there be any limit, then, till you come to perfection? So, what comes of it ? That a perfect man, that is to say, the type that is to come of this race, perhaps millions of years hence, that man can come today. And this is what the Yogis say, that all great Incarnations and Prophets are such men; that they reached perfection in this one life. We have had such men at all periods of the world's history and at all times. Quite recently, there was such a man (Srī Rāmakrishna) who lived the life of the whole human race and reached the end even in this life.

'Even this hastening of the growth must be under laws. Suppose we can investigate these laws and understand their secrets and apply them to our own needs; it follows that we grow. We hasten our growth, we hasten our development, and we become perfect, even in this life. This is the higher part of our life, and the science of the study of mind and its powers has this perfection as its real end. Helping others with money and other material things and teaching them how to go on smoothly in their daily life are mere details.

'The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and not let him wait and wait for ages, just a plaything in the hands of the physical world, like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to wave and tossing about in the ocean. This science wants you to be strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of nature, and get beyond this little life. That is the great idea.'[47]

Vedantic Message of Strength and Fearlessness

Spiritual knowledge confers on man infinite strength and fearlessness. That is the best proof of its truth and utility. Referring to this, Swāmī Vivekānanda said in his lecture on 'Vedānta and Its Application to Indian Life' delivered in Madras in 1897:

'And in my mind rises from the past the vision of the great emperor of the West, Alexander the Great, and I see, as it were in a picture, the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our *sannyāsins* (monks) in the forest; the old man he was talking to, perhaps naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor astonished at his wisdom, tempting him with gold and honour to come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold, and smiles at his temptations, and refuses; and then the Emperor standing on his authority as an Emperor, says, "I will kill you, if you do not come", and the man bursts into a laugh and says, "You never told such a falsehood in your life as you tell just now. Who can kill me ? *Me* you kill, Emperor of the material world ! Never ! For I am Spirit unborn and undecaying; never was I born and never do I die; I am the Infinite, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient; and you kill me, child that you are !" That is strength, that is strength.'[48]

Swāmī Vivekānanda also gives as illustration of spiritual strength the example of an Indian monk during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. He was stabbed by an English soldier. The Indian soldiers captured this English soldier and brought him before the dying monk to be identified and, if identified, to kill him in revenge. But the monk, who had realized his Self and his oneness with all beings, seeing his assailant before him, broke his silence of fifteen years to say to his murderer with his dying breath and in a tone suffused with love: 'And Thou also art He !'

The strength and fearlessness of Socrates in the face of death, and his gentleness, had its source in his spiritual knowledge. When Crito asked him: 'In what way shall we bury you, Socrates ?', Socrates answered: 'In any way you like, but first you must catch *me*, the real me. Be of good cheer, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with *that* whatever is usual and what you think best.'[49]

If man is to live a true life, if he is to achieve real life fulfilment, he has to manifest the infinite Self within him by controlling and transcending his lower self, his finite sense-bound nature. There is a technique for achieving this, and the religions of the world tell us about it with varying degrees of clarity. *But in India alone did this subject receive treatment at once scientific and thorough in its spirit and methods, and impersonal and universal in its results and applications.*

Science and Vedanta Complementary

Religion so expounded has a message for all humanity. Science through its technology may build for man a first class house, and equip it with radio, television, and other gadgets; the social security measures of a Welfare State may provide him with everything necessary for a happy, fulfilled life in this world, and even, through the State Church, in the world beyond; the man himself may give his house such arresting names as *Śānti Kuñja* (Peace Retreat), or Happy Villa. Yet none of these can ensure that he will live in that house in peace or happiness. For that depends, to a large extent, on another source of strength and nourishment, another type of knowledge and discipline—the knowledge and discipline proceeding from religion. If man can have the help of the positive sciences to create a healthy external environment, and the help of the science of spirituality to create a healthy internal environment, he can hope to achieve total life fulfilment; not otherwise. This is the view of the Upaniṣads.

But today this is not the picture that modern civilization presents. Man in this technological civilization is feeling inwardly impoverished and empty in an environment of wealth, power, and pleasure; he is full of tension and sorrow, doubt and uncertainty all the time. Juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, suicide, and a variety of other maladies are ever on the increase. Why ? Because man is not inwardly satisfied; he is smitten with ennui and boredom arising from the limitations of his sense-bound *Weltanschauung*. Indian thinkers foresaw this predicament of modern man ages ago. Says the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad:*

Yadā carmavat ākāsaṁ veṣṭayiṣyanti mānavāḥ;
Tadā devaṁ avijñāya duḥkhasyānto bhaviṣyati—

'Men may (through their technical skill) roll up the sky like a piece of leather; still there will be no end of sorrow for them without realizing the Luminous One within.'[50]

Schopenhauer said a hundred years ago:

'All men who are secure from want and care, now that at last they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves.'[51]

Today, man is his own major burden and problem. He can tackle and solve this problem not by going in for more positivistic science, more technology, more of life's amenities, more socio-political manipulation of human conditions, but by the cultivation of the science of religion, by the understanding and practice of this science. Said Swāmī Vivekānanda:

'You must bear in mind that religion does not consist in talk, or doctrines or books, but in realization; it is not learning but being.'[52]

It is in this sense that India understood religion; and it is this idea of religion that Swāmī Vivekānanda expounded in West and East through his powerful voice. The end and aim of religion, as our ancient teachers put it, is the experience, *anubhava*, of God, through the steady growth in man's spiritual awareness. *That is the touchstone of religion.* There is such a thing as the spiritual growth of the individual, step by step. We experience this growth, just as we see a building rising up step by step, brick by brick. When we live the life of religion, strength comes to us, consciousness becomes enlarged, sympathies grow and widen, and we feel that we are growing into better men. It is only the strength that proceeds from such inward growth and development that will enable man to digest and assimilate the energies released by the progress of science. Such a one alone has the strength and wisdom to convert the chaos of life into a pattern of happiness and general welfare. If religion is taken away from society, what remains is simple barbarism. Ancient civilizations were destroyed by barbarians bred outside those civilizations. But modern civilization, if it is to go the same way, will be destroyed by barbarians bred within the civilization itself. What can save us from this predicament is a little 'Christian love'[53] in our hearts for our neighbours, in the words of Bertrand Russell, or a little more altruism, in the words of Pitirim Sorokin of Harvard University.[54] This love comes from the *practice* of religion, as defined by Swāmī Vivekānanda and other great teachers of the world. Says Vivekānanda:

'Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man.'[55]

Again:

'Him I call a *mahātman* (Great Soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *durātman* (wicked soul).'[56]

That is the function of religion; the finite man reaches out to the infinite man. No other discipline can give this education to man.

'Now comes the question, Can religion really accomplish anything ?' asked Swāmī Vivekānanda, and proceeded to answer:

'It can. It brings to man eternal life. It has made man what he is and will make of this human animal a god. That is what religion can do. Take religion from human society and what will remain ? Nothing but a forest of brutes. Sense-happiness is not the goal of humanity. Wisdom (*jñāna*) is the goal of all life. We find that man enjoys his intellect more than an animal enjoys its senses; and we see that man enjoys his spiritual nature even more than his rational nature. So the highest wisdom must be this spiritual knowledge. With this knowledge will come bliss.'[57]

Conclusion

Understood in this light, there is no conflict between science and religion. Both have the identical aim of helping man to grow in spirituality, of ushering in a better social order which alone can provide him with the stimulus to total life-fulfilment. Each by itself is insufficient and helpless. They have been tried separately with unsatisfactory results. The old civilizations took guidance solely from religion; their achievements were partial and limited. Modern civilization relies solely on science; its achievements also have turned out to be partial and limited. *The combination today of the spiritual energies of these two complementary disciplines in the life of man will produce fully integrated human beings and thus help to evolve a complete human civilization for which the world is ripe and waiting.* This is the most outstanding contribution of Swāmī Vivekānanda to human thought today. This synthetic vision of his finds lucid expression in a brief but comprehensive testament of his Vedāntic faith:

'Each soul is potentially divine.

'The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external and internal.

'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one, or more, or all of these—and *be free.*

'*This is the whole of religion.* Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.'[58]

The Vedānta expounded by Vivekānanda as the synthesis of science and religion is also the synthesis of head and heart, of the classical and the romantic in the human heritage. The erstwhile tendency in modern education to treat the humanities and the sciences as mutually exclusive disciplines is giving place to the Vedāntic awareness that they are complementary to each other. Himself 'the personification of the harmony of all human energy', in the words of Romain Rolland which I quoted at the beginning of this paper, Vivekānanda has bequeathed to man, in a moving passage, his vision of the unity and synthesis of all human energy and aspiration. Making a prophetic reference to the future religion of humanity in the course of his lecture on 'The Absolute and Manifestation' delivered in London in 1896, he said:

'In Buddha, we had the great universal heart, and infinite patience, making religion practical, and bringing it to everyone's door. In Śaṅkarācārya, we saw tremendous intellectual power, throwing the scorching light of reason upon everything. We want today that bright sun of intellectuality joined with the heart of Buddha, the wonderful, infinite heart of love and mercy. This union will give us the highest philosophy. Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples.'[59]

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SCIENCE AND VIVEKANANDA

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The hundred years which separate us from the birth of Vivekananda show up as probably the most revolutionary and dramatic Europe has undergone. I am referring, of course, to the second half of the Nineteenth and to the first half of the Twentieth centuries.

The first period meant for Europe the prevalence of Materialism and Positivism which brought about the supremacy of science, economics and the development of technology. In the domain of the natural sciences especially, all the other hitherto independent systems—and metaphysics even—found themselves hopelessly enmeshed by the methods and the laws of the new materialistic rationality. The old idealistic concepts were driven out and the protests of the thinkers of that age were like voices in the wilderness. And thus Science came to believe that Science alone held the keys to the secrets of Reality.

Alongside the Natural Sciences, technology and economics developed at a tremendous pace and were to change within a couple of decades the external aspects of our lives and to make their influence felt even in the most remote corners of the world. Man was soon to become engrossed in his mechanical achievements and to worship the Machine—a creation of his own rationality. The representative type of this period became the man who adapted his views of life and his ideals to an external, mechanical civilization. Emotions and the intangible faculties were considered as suspect and unreliable. What counted was the manifest, tangible world in which he moved and which Science and the Machine were constantly improving for him.

The worship of the Machine replaced the worship of God and deprived man of life's inner meaning. The Machine changed him into its own image and essence, as Valery says. Man became a number who no longer worried about any kind of transcendency and who used his fellowmen as simply "means to an end". The notion of Utility became the highest ideal of man, and man's Purpose became the accomplishment and the elaboration of the Practical, the Useful, the Comfortable.

In this sort of atmosphere it is little wonder that man should very soon have started to feel lost and insecure—unable to adapt himself to those mechanical surroundings he himself had created—comfortless and empty in the midst of his physical comforts and his material abundance. Man had lost the Meaning of his Existence and was driven in his anguish to uncover from the ashes of his material delusions the bright, ever burning ember of Truth.

The beginning of the Twentieth Century compared with the second half of the Nineteenth is like the burning ember amidst the ashes. Nevertheless, we now come to feel as dwellers of two distinct worlds—one which has vanished behind us, and a new one as yet unexplored. This has added to our anxieties and has created for many of us great difficulties in finding the new, promising elements of our era. Adopting an attitude of indifference or mistrust, we often set ourselves stubbornly against our century without bothering to make the slightest effort to understand its great prospects. Yet nothing can allay our fears better than a clear understanding of the possibilities of our epoch and a conscious integration of its many positive elements. These are to be found above all in the great scientific discoveries of our century—and in the implications of these discoveries. So let us pause to consider them before proceeding to the other domains of modern Western thought and metaphysics.

Contrary to its self-sufficiency and arrogance of the last century, Science to-day with all its tremendous achievements treads softly and humbly on the threshold of the Unknown. And Science has come to believe that behind the phenomenal world another world lies hidden which has set the stage for the former. It is the world which Le Roy calls the "Real World". Curious as this may seem, we may truly say that Science in the Twentieth Century has come face to face with the veil of Maya and is now attempting, with all due reverence, to catch a glimpse of what lies behind.

Swami Vivekananda's appearance in our midst—his presence in Europe and America—coincided with the end of the Nineteenth and the beginning of the Twentieth Century; with the end of the old Era and the beginning of the new. In the gross, mechanical materialism of our environment Swami Vivekananda, profoundly rooted in the spirit of Advaita Vedanta, was able to foresee the dawn of a new Era and to point the way to a new epoch. This prophet of titanic strength and superhuman courage raised his voice to give spiritual expression to the new perspectives of the West.

Dismissing for a moment the troubles and discords of our civilization, let us consider these new perspectives, the positive elements which Western thought offers us to-day in all its domains.

Einstein set the stage with his Relativity Theories. Their impact on the scientific mind was tremendous, and their effect, revolutionary. Here are some of the milestones on the new trails Einstein opened to Science:

The Space-Time unit through the introduction of Time as the Fourth Dimension into the previous Three-Dimensional Space measurement scale in Physics.

The acceptance that a phenomenon differs according to the position of motion of the point occupied by the observer, and also that the volume of any given body decreases with its increasing speed.

The formulation that the seeming opposition between Gravity and Inertia—as introduced by Newton—is in point of fact, a unity, and that Mass is but a certain form of Energy, and vice versa.

Contrary to the theory prevailing since Copernicus that the Universe is unlimited and infinite, Einstein's assertion that it is unlimited but finite—like the surface of a sphere to a Two-Dimensional observer.

Einstein's Theory is especially concerned with Motion. Anything that exists, that is visible, all matter and even the so-called dead matter, is in motion. The theory is built without making use of the concept of Absolute Motion. And yet, besides this relativity of concepts referring to motion, we must not forget that Einstein has partly created and partly introduced in physics a new Absolutism: the unsurpassable Speed of Light. And through this—the Absolute Space Measure.

It is only in the non-Euclidean geometry that we have absolute space measures. In the Euclidean geometry our measurements were based on a relationship of comparison with the degrees of the metre, or of other such man-made standard scales of measurement. But the absolute, unmeasurable "nameless numbers" or measures are independent of any comparative relationship. They are abstractions, pure formulas. Until Einstein we were measuring with fixed, steady, ready-made measures. Nowadays we do not do it exclusively any more.

Another point of view of Einstein's Theory is the conquest of time. He considers that there is nothing to make us conceive absolute motion, or speed, since we completely lack any fixed point in the universe. The acceptance that the speed of light is the greatest possible velocity enables Einstein to find the dependence of Time on this absolute velocity.

After Einstein's Theory, the second theory to revolutionize the world of science and to shatter its materialistic shackles of the last century is the Theory of the Quantum. Einstein's Relativity Theory and Planck's Quantum Theory if taken together, give an entirely new approach to the world of matter and a new basis to modern thought. Planck's Theory triggered off scientific discoveries and momentous consequences, since the nature of light, of energy and of matter itself was involved. In his study of Radiation, Planck discovered the so-called Quantum, and he proved that Energy is not emitted or absorbed in a continuous line but in minute amounts called Quanta.

It is now clear that the concept prevailing since Aristotle, that "Nature makes no jumps" cannot hold ground any more. In fact, Planck's Theory proves the opposite—that Nature does make jumps. Planck believed at first that his Theory applied only to the Rays emitted by Heated Bodies. However it proved to be true in all the applications of the laws of matter.

The implications of the theories of Einstein and Planck taken together are radical and very far-reaching. There can no longer be talk of tangible matter on one side and of non-tangible energy on the other, for it has been proved that matter and energy are identical.

Followers of Einstein and Planck show an increasing tendency to abolish the old concept of dualism in their scientific comprehension of phenomena. Indeed we now see them to have proceeded beyond their traditional, *analytical* methods of comprehending nature and its oppositions, to a new synthetic interpretation of phenomena where the synthesis conceived is not a mere outcome of oppositions. The new approach is both subtle and significant. For in refuting the old dualistic opposition between matter and energy they do not introduce a new extreme—that of Monism, in other words, that all is matter or all is energy. They come nearer to the conception of a "double-faced", but not dual, reality of phenomena, and this new scientific approach could be called the "non-dualistic" approach.

In this connection, the first name which comes to mind is that of De Broglie. Until his arrival on the scientific scene, two contradictory theories on the nature of Light had been put forward—the Corpuscular Theory and the Theory of Waves. De Broglie came and integrated these two apparent incompatibilities into an entirely novel concept, for he was to show that Light consists of Corpuscles as well as Waves, without the one excluding the other, in spite of their contrasting aspects. Both aspects are of one and the same reality of Light. And De Broglie's theory proved to be equally true for all other particles of matter and especially for electrons.

It is important to remember that the two contrasting aspects are never to be seen together at the same moment. Experiments show only the one or the other aspect.

Bohr has advanced this notion of the "double-faced" and contrasting nature of all particles in his theoretical formula of the principle of "complementarity". We have to accept this as a form of knowledge which has greatly changed our views on Matter. For as long as matter could be conceived as a product of something tangible (material) or as a product of something non-tangible (spiritual), there was a firm and irreconcilable conviction established for the one or the other. But according to modern scientific conclusions, matter proves itself to be neither the one, nor the other. Although it only seems to be either a corpuscle or a wave, it is, as they say, corpuscle as well as wave.

To the question "Is matter more than just mass?", modern Science replies, "*It is, and it is not*". In fact, matter becomes energy and energy becomes matter—yes, the experiment of "transmutation" has succeeded in our modern times ! One can de-materialise the tangible and materialise the non-tangible.

It is clear that after Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Planck's Theory of the Quantum, De Broglie's work on the nature of Light and Bohr's Principle of Complementarity, altogether new perspectives have been opened to us in the scientific field. And these perspectives are being constantly exploited and enlarged. There is Heisenberg, for example, who has contributed his principle of Relations of Uncertainty. He derives his theory from the fact that we can never exactly and at the same time determine both the location and the momentum of corpuscles. Thus Heisenberg has dealt a death blow to the doctrine of Determinism. He himself says: "According to the sharp formulation of the laws of causality, when we know exactly the present we can calculate the future". In this statement—Heisenberg affirms—"it is not the conclusion which is wrong, but the presupposition. In fact we principally cannot know the present in all its degrees of determination." In another context, Planck has already declared: "In the world of atoms, the law of causality has definitely failed."

To conclude this brief exposition of some of the most striking achievements of modern physics, the phrase of Hamlet comes to mind—that "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of..." Indeed, regarding the heavens—or the Macrocosm—scientists tell us that the universe of observable galaxies is in expansion due to the operation of forces as yet unknown and quite distinct from gravitation. Hoyle and other astrophysicists have postulated a continuous process of creation of galaxies, which could explain this apparent expansion, or movement "outwards", within our very limited field of observation. Hoyle has shown that the amount of Hydrogen in the observable universe *remains constant* in spite of the fact that Hydrogen is the raw material from which galaxies condense and is, at the same time, the fuel which the stars are constantly burning up at a prodigious rate and converting into Helium and Radiation. Since the supply of Hydrogen is not diminishing, astrophysicists have had to deduce that atoms of Hydrogen are being created somewhere, and indeed they have recently discovered that this is precisely what is happening in the so-called empty spaces between the galaxies. So the picture which is presented to us is one where these, the simple atoms of matter, are continuously being born due to the application of forces as yet beyond our comprehension, and where this matter evolves in due course into its more complex forms throughout the universe.

Other investigators of the sequences of creation postulate the explosion of a cloud of so-called "proto-matter" which could create at the same time one *material* meta-galaxy and another one of "*anti*-matter".

Generally speaking we could say that the evolution of Physics and Chemistry in the Twentieth Century has changed our conception of the world, from an inert representation to an all-moving, manifested-non-manifested reality. In another scientific field, modern Biology is giving us a similar picture, by erasing the mechanistic formulas of Nineteenth Century biology concerning life and so-called lifeless matter and showing it to us as an all-comprehending, vital and dynamic phenomenon. Here we can clearly distinguish the same trends as those recently established in Physics and Chemistry. The new concepts—those of time, movement, complementarity, entirety, integration, non-determinism—the principle of uncertainty and of nature making 'jumps', or mutations—all these are projected in the works of modern biologists and are gradually obliterating the rigid scientific dogmas of the previous century.

The living organism is no longer shown as a "physico-chemical machine", but as containing vital dynamism and also those life-forming, life-directing powers described as "potentialities within an organism". The mere fact of a working organisation is inexplicable in physico-chemical terms. Modern Biology delcares also that an organism cannot be represented as being merely the sum of its parts—it is far more than that. Parts lack independent existence. They gain value, sense and importance only in the entirety and in their integration in the organism. Haldane, the distinguished British biologist, has advanced these ideas in his Theory of Holism (from the Greek 'holos', meaning 'entire'). The obstacles which are encountered in modern physics and chemistry are also found in modern biological research, one of these being the fact that that which exists has an intrinsic value and quantity from within which is greater than that which is observable from without. Yet the scientific observer is bound to stand on the outside only. Also, as in microphysics, there is the difficulty that the observer cannot be separated from the observed. So in many aspects of biological investigation means other than the traditional methods of scientific analysis are required. Modern Psychology may be able to provide these means.

Present inquiry into the phenomena of Life has not only shown the error of the deterministic beliefs and dogmas of the past but has also pointed out that such phenomena do not necessarily conform to the rules of common logic and experience. For the phenomenon of Life is a particular phenomenon with its own particular laws of working beyond the limits of common sense and rationality. It is an irrational—or better—a supra-rational phenomenon.

Modern biology has also put in question the strict utilitarianism of the past. It believes that Life's forms, in all their myriad varieties of beauty, are not evolved for the purposes of utility alone. It goes on to assert the supra-rationality of the phenomenon of Life where modern biology has found that besides the laws of causality other laws co-exist which work *independently* and without being affected by causality.

All the great biologists of our century, working on different lines of research have come to these conclusions. We have Uexkull, Haldane and Hans Friedman, the great philosopher biologist, to mention only three of many others. Of course, followers of the old school still exist, clinging to their deterministic views and disputing the new ideas. As a great contemporary scientist has remarked, a belief cannot easily be reversed, even by the most rigorous demonstrations.

In summing up the characteristic trends in modern scientific thought as we have reviewed them, we may draw certain important conclusions.

In the first place, we have seen that since the beginning of the Twentieth Century a revolution in scientific thinking is taking place and that its focus is in the new discoveries in Physics chiefly, but also in Chemistry and Biology. We may generally define this revolution as the new drive in science to direct its investigations from the manifested world of life and matter to the substratum of the phenomenal world—to the non-manifested fundamentals of reality. The classical physics of the Nineteenth Century is complemented to-day by the microphysics of the Twentieth. Great mathematicians apply "nameless" numbers and measures, new absolutes which are independent of comparative relationships. Einstein introduces a new category of time as a fourth dimension. His Space-Time unit brings an intuitive quality to his concept of a comprehensive past-present-future continuum which is independent of the linear-causal relationships expressed in the course of succession of past, present and future.

De Broglie's unifield theory of the double-contrasting aspect of matter and Bohr's formula of Complementarity force us to correct some of the old beliefs and to reconsider the validity of exclusive statements in regard to the nature of matter. More and more we find that the scientific dualism of the past is giving way to the new, non-dualistic approach and to concepts such as that of Complementarity which admit the Unknown and perhaps the unknowable Oneness.

Heisenberg in his Relations of Uncertainty expresses the doubt which Science itself has introduced in its experimental field. Henceforth, scientific truths can be but the relative findings of experience and will have no autonomous, absolute standing. Again, the impossibility of separating the observer from the observed, and even from the instrument of his observation emphasizes the interdependence of subject and object in the process of knowledge.

In the vast domain of astrophysics we find confirmation of the theories of Quantum physics as regards the aspects of Matter and Energy. Inductive research in macrocosmic velocities and processes of creation arrives at conclusions which correlate with those of microphysics.

When we come to Biology we find a new science which has taken the place of a purely descriptive fauna and flora classification system and which has matured beyond a merely vitalistic interpretation of the phenomena of life. It is giving to-day serious consideration to those latent, non-manifested factors in life's organisms, which as formative powers or "potentialities" act independently of the laws of causality. Working hand in hand with psychology it is proclaiming the non-utilitarian, non-rational interpretation of life's phenomena.

We have signalized the milestones of the recent progress of European scientific thought. Having done so, however, we should not hasten to proclaim that a new era has been established. Vast new territories have been won to Science, perhaps the Promised Land, but it is empty as yet and the cities of the future have still to be built. Certainly the glittering mansions of Nineteenth Century rationalism, materialism and positivism have been abandoned in the forward march of Science, and left behind to crumble into dust. But the structures of the future have yet to take shape. The close partnership between the many branches of science augurs well however, as indeed do the sincere intentions to create dwellings for man with altogether better proportions and wider perspectives opening upon the many mysterious vistas of our human destiny.

Transition from one period to another however, as emigration to a new land, be it a richer one, is both a difficult and a painful process. It involves a profound spiritual acceptance of the new, a complete integration—not a superficial and passive agreement. The residues of the past are numerous and weighty and they cannot be easily and lightly cast aside.

To-day's transition is probably the hardest and most dramatic Europe has had to undergo in all its turbulent history of endeavour and strife on the intellectual and spiritual planes. A complete and radical change is urgently being called for in our traditional values and in our time-honoured categories of thought and experience. And we feel that unless this transformation is achieved there may be but little hope for our ultimate survival.

Let us consider the situation. When time and space are taken as one unit, when the logical exclusive statement "This or the other" becomes "This as well as the other", when the organism is no longer a machine but the result of "potentialities" transcending causality, when the object cannot be truly separated from the subject, when matter is and is not mass, when life itself is shown to be a non-rational phenomenon—it is clear that our traditional instruments of western reasoning and understanding can neither keep pace, nor suffice.

There was a time when we could live, serene and credulous, on the deterministic and rational plane. Our traditional logic was adequate and valid, then. But things started to change when man's mind transcended, in scientific experience, the realm of classic rationality.

To-day, there is another factor—an urgent one—which we must also consider. Modern science has become part of our way of life, in all its expressions, and we can no more ignore it than deliberately condemn ourselves to ultimate extinction. The discoveries of Science have certainly altered our daily lives, but many of its revelations are now touching upon the very base of our existence. Also, in its new domains, Science is meeting Philosophy and even Religion, and will soon claim condominium.

The problems of re-adjustment confront to-day not only the ordinary man who finds that he must detach himself from the old model of understanding and attach himself to the new, but also our scientists who show more awareness than any of us. These same problems have prompted Heisenberg to declare that to-day's physics needs another way of comprehension, and he does not exclude the possibility that the Far East may provide it, because the Indians and the Japanese are alien to the sharp, cold rationalism of Europe.

The attraction that Indian thought has had for the West is by no means a contemporary development. Neither is it a fortuitous occurrence. Since Greek philosophy and science, itself imbued with the Indian spirit, laid the foundations of our Western civilization, characteristic affinities between East and West have existed and may be traced to this day.

It was in the Eighteenth Century, however, in France and especially in Germany that Indian spirituality was able to make its influence felt more directly, through the first translations of the Upanishads. Many representative thinkers of the time took an active interest in the interpretation of the Indian spirit through the translation of its Sanskrit form. As a result, we find a marked trend throughout Europe to welcome and absorb Indian and Oriental thought. It has often been said that just as the Sixteenth Century discovered classical antiquity, the end of the Eighteenth Century rediscovers the spiritual values of the East. Yet we shall have to wait until the beginning of the Nineteenth Century before we can speak of an irruption of Indian thought into Europe.

The effect of this irruption was to give wide propagation through the medium of the great Euorpean Orientalists. Indian concepts and beliefs found ready access into the salons of the intelligentsia where they were often misunderstood and misquoted, although here and there in the process of their vulgarisation they met with appreciation and praise. But generally speaking, there was a definite obstacle to the real understanding of the Indian spirit, in the nature of the European mind structure itself which, due to its distinctive formation through the centuries, could not be truly receptive. Consequently, even when European orientalists delved deeply into the study of Sanskrit in order to be able to give the exact translation of texts, their interpretation was, if not insufficient, very often faulty. For, inasmuch as it may be said that the letter is not the spirit, this certainly applies to the interpretation of Indian texts.

In effect, an impasse had been reached. Fortunately, India herself came to Europe's rescue before the close of the Nineteenth Century, when some of her great sages and philosophers decided to come out of their forest isolation, even to cross the frontiers of their country, in order that they themselves should come into contact with Europe and the West. They were able to talk to us in one of our European languages and often they were scholars of European culture and science, but if they became the authentic interpreters of Indian spirituality it was only because they themselves were imbued with that spirit.

The first to come was Ramakrishna's great disciple, Swami Vivekananda whose birth centenary is now being celebrated in both East and West. As he was to put it, it was the first time in the history of the world that an Indian monk had crossed the ocean. He came to us not as a prophet proclaiming his own doctrine, but as an exponent of Shankara's Advaita Vedanta and a bearer of the purest spiritual truths ever revealed to man.

With the appearance of Swami Vivekananda, Europe perhaps began to be more aware of the fact that although India could teach neither social reforms nor mechanical improvements, she had the authority to teach something infinitely more important—namely, the highest truths of the mind, of the heart and of the soul of man, which no time, no place and no cause can contradict.

Vivekananda had seen that the time was ripe for that ancient Truth, an Indian heritage born and handed down long ago from the spiritual realms, to be revealed to all... "It shall no more be a Rahasya, a secret, it shall no more live with monks in caves and forests and the Himalayas, but (it shall) become the common property to all." And like a Prometheus, Vivekananda brings the flame of truth "from heaven to earth," even to the very centre of life's mundane activities and worldly preoccupations.

Vivekananda was soon to recognise the undeniable qualities of the West and also its evident shortcomings. He would often praise the former but he would point out the defects with fearless candour and with acute perception. For example, condemning the utilitarian standards of the time, he used to exclaim: "In these days, we have to measure everything by utility ... What right has a person to ask that truth should be judged by the standard of utility or money ! Suppose there is no utility, will it be less true ?" He found the utilitarian mentality primitive and childish, and he would rebuke in these scoffing words: "Babies judge the whole universe from their own standpoint, that of producing gingerbread, and so do the babies of the world. Sad to say, at a later end of this Nineteenth Century, that these are passing for the learned, the most rational, the most logical, the most intelligent crowd ever seen on this earth".

On another occasion when singling out the ineptitude of the mechanistic and harshly rational attitude to life which prevailed, Swami Vivekananda remonstrated: "Devils are machines of darkness, angels are machines of light. But both are machines. Man alone is alive. Break the machine, strike the balance and then man can become free."

He would also declare: "Nothing beyond reason can be an object of sense-knowledge. We feel the limited character of reason, yet it does bring us to a plane where we get a glimpse of something beyond. The question then arises—Has man an instrument that transcends reason ? It is very probable that in man there is a power to get beyond reason . . . We know as yet but little of man, consequently but little of the universe. When we know more of man, we shall probably know more of the universe."

Vivekananda saw in science a limitless field of exploration where we walk step by step, pausing from time to time, and then "we return with freshened energy".

Against the foolish boasts of that period proclaiming science to have reached the pinnacle of its development, he was convinced that science was but at the threshold of its discoveries. Himself aware of the scientific problems of his days, he often tried to show that Science's most important task was to break down the walls of crude rationality inside which it had imprisoned itself, and to get out into the open vistas of free and unprejudiced inquiry.

"The great question of questions at the present time", he would say, "is this: Taking for granted that the known and the knowable are bounded on both sides by the unknowable and the infinitely Unknown, why struggle for that infinitely unknown ? Why shall we not be content with the known ? Why shall we not rest satisfied with eating, drinking and doing a little good to society ? But fortunately we must inquire into the beyond . . . We have to go beyond our limits and struggle to know that which seems unknowable, and this struggle must continue."

This quest into the beyond Vivekananda considered the common scope of both Science and Religion. The methods differ but the motive is the same. Both have to strive incessantly in their search for the non-manifested unity which underlies the diversity of phenomena.

In Vivekananda's time science in Europe had only just discovered that the various kinds of energies differently known as electricity, heat, magnetism, and so forth, were convertible into a single energy unit which could express them all. Vivekananda welcomed this discovery and pointed out that it could be found in the old Indian texts of Samhita, with the theory of Prana and Akasha. And yet, he noted, there was still a sharp dualism in science, between the unit of force (energy) and that of matter. He was asking: "Is there any unity to be found among them ? Can they be melted into one ?" "Our modern science", he would add, "is mute here. It has not found its way out." But he foresaw that having now discovered the unity of energy, science would soon discover the unity of matter and energy. This, of course, is precisely what Twentieth Century science did discover.

Swami Vivekananda went on to teach of another unity—that of mind which is also matter, but matter in a tenuous form—and of still another unity, the last of all, to which the mind is but an instrument.

Referring to the mathematical abstractions, he considered them as metaphysical concepts and a means to the explanation of the physical. He used to say: "Apart from the question whether abstractions are possible or not, or whether there is something besides the generalised groups or not, it is plain that these notions of matter, force, time or space, causation, law or mind are held to be unity abstracted and independent in themselves of the groups and that it is only when they are thought as such that they furnish themselves as explanations of the facts in sense perception. That is to say, apart from the validity of these notions, we see two facts about them: first, they are metaphysical and not otherwise."

Considering the notion of time, Vivekananda would often repeat that time is only one way of thinking. In truth—"all time is in us, we are not in time". He also said: "Time, space and causation cannot be said to be independent existences" ... "The present has no existence apart from the past and the future. It is all one complete whole, the idea of time being imposed upon us by the form of our understanding."

As we have already seen, Science to-day makes use of abstractions which are independent formulas in themselves and beyond any possible representation. Also, after Einstein's theory of a time-space unity, our modern conception of time has had to accept the unity of a compounded past, present and future.

In order to make it possible for us to approach a different plane of comprehension, Swami Vivekananda saw as a first step for us, a radical change in our way of thinking. He would explain that the mind had to yield, for example, to the apparent contradiction of "It is and it is not". Speaking on the theory of Maya he would show the process of a more essential logic than that of exclusiveness and determinism—in fact, the logic of Advaita Vedanta.

Science in the Twentieth Century, as we have noted, was soon impelled to accept seemingly contradictory statements as synthetically logical, and to give place to non-exclusive statements. In practice our old logic is already receiving in the hands of Science the overhaul which it so urgently needed.

In conclusion, Vivekananda came to the West to attest the strength and the significance of life's non-manifested power. His presence among us was like a guiding beacon of power and of light, which the benevolent Providence had seen fit to send us. He showed us the way to a broader reality, away from the suffocating workshops of the Machine.

There is a question, however, that may be asked by Indians and Europeans alike. "Vivekananda was a sage and a religious personality. How is it possible", they will ask, "for anyone to place him in the framework of modern science ?"

To the Indian, one would reply with a statement Vivekananda himself once made—"Advaita Vedanta is the most scientific religion"—and also by quoting his prophecy that science and religion would meet and shake hands one day.

For the benefit of the European, one would recall the words of Spengler, abstraction being made if one should so wish, of his noted historical pessimism: "Every science the slow rise of which coincides with the end of a civilization, is but a confirmation of very old religious and metaphysical teachings under a new guise."

CHAPTER VIII

ESSENCE OF UPANISHADS

Satya Deva Shastri

Vedas are the most ancient documents of human thoughts in human history. Sayanacharya, the great commentator on Vedas has defined Vedas in these words:

इष्ट प्राप्त्यनिष्ट परिहार्यों अलौकिकं उपायं यो ग्रन्थो वेदयति स वेदः ।

("Isht Praptyanisht Pariharyo Alowkikam Upayam Yo Grantho Vedayati Sah Vedah.") i.e. The sacred book that shows the uncommon divine path leading to attainment of everlasting peace and happiness—the goal of human life preventing all the miseries of life is Veda. The song of eternal Wisdom and Truth was sung by the great Rishis—Seers of Vedic period in very beautiful, poetic and flowing language in a state of ecstasy. They realised the supreme truth and wisdom in communion with nature and revealed it in the form of Mantras. Veda is comprised of three *kands*—broad divisions —Jnankand, Karamkand and Upasanakand. The Upanishadas form the jnankand—the very essence of Vedas.

According to Sayanacharya Upanishad means Rahasya—Secret. The word Upanishad is derived from root 'seed' meaning firstly to sit, secondly to attain, thirdly to loosen. 'Upa' is a prefix meaning near, close and 'ni' meaning undoubtedly, with certainty. Upanishadas contain the secret and sacred knowledge that enables man to loosen the fetters of life, to attain eternal bliss and to sit near Brahman—the Supreme Truth.

As it has been said in Rig Veda—

एकं सद्विप्रा वहुधा वदन्त्यमग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ।

(Ekam Sadvipra Vahudha Vadantyamagnim Yamam Matarishwanamahuḥ.) i.e. Truth is one but the men of wisdom call it by many names—Agnim—Fire, Yam and Matarishwan. Rishis of Upanishadas speak about the same Truth.

Upanishadas are 108 in number, but 10 Upanishadas are main and important on which Shankaracharya has written commentaries i.e. (1) Isha (2) Kena (3) Katha (4) Mundak (5) Mandukya (6) Aiteraya (7) Tattiriya (8) Prashna (9) Chhandogya and (10) Brihdaranyak. Ishopanishad is the smallest of all, but contains the deepest and highest wisdom in 18 mantras. The first two mantras present the complete philosophy of life in a very excellent manner as it has been rightly said by Mahatma Gandhi in an article 'Essence of Hinduism' that if all the Hindu scriptures are lost and Ishopanishad is preserved, then nothing is lost—Hinduism is bound to survive and flourish.

In the first two mantras the end of human life and the means to attain it are described in very clear terms. The first mantra runs thus:—

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मागृधः कस्यस्वित् धनम् ।।

(Ishavasyamidam Sarvam yat Kincha Jagatyam jagat, ten tyaktena bhunjithaḥ magridhaḥ Kasyaswitdhanam.)

The literal meaning of the verse is that all this universe—individual and universal existence—is abode of Ish—Lord—the ruler and controller of the universe. Therefore enjoy life with the spirit of detachment. Don't be greedy. To whom the riches of the world belong ? It belongs to none. If it belongs to some one, it verily belongs to the Lord—Universal Self.

In this mantra two fundamental principles have been explained in a very brief and concise form, but in elucidative manner. There is one eternal principle known as Ish—Atma. The eternal principle, ruler of the universe is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, permeating in every particle of the universe. To attain this eternal principle the characteristic of which is existence, consciousness and bliss and to live it from moment to moment is the supreme goal of human life and without realisation of that goal, human life is waste, as it has been said in Kenopanishad:—

इह् चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिह्यवेदीन महती विनष्टिः ।
भूतेषू भूतेषु विचिन्त्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्मामालोकादमृता भबन्ति ।।

("Iha chedavedidatha Satyamasti na chedihavedeena mahati vinashatih, Bhuteshu bhuteshu vichintya dhirah pretyasmadlokadamrita bhavanti.")

If self-truth is realised in this very life then it is all right, but if the self-knowledge is not attained then the life is wasted and destroyed completely. The wise realising the Truth in each and every being transcending this mortal world attain immortality.

The second principle—'Prakriti'—the nature of the world is described by the word 'jagat'. The word 'jagat' is derived from root 'gam' meaning moving without stop. 'Jagat' means continuous movement—constant change. The world is ever changing. It is in a constant flux. It is not what it appears to be. Its very nature is change. Man generally does not live in the world of nature, the very characteristic of which is change, but he lives in his own projected mental world, thinking that all his belongings, relations should exist permanently. This mental world is illusory, unreal, hence man is always confronted with the conflict between the world of nature and the projected mental world. This is the root cause of all his misery in life. He shuts his eyes to see the changing nature of the world.

There is a mantra in Rigveda:—

एकोऽहम् वहुस्याम प्रजायेम् ।

(Ekoham Vahusyam prajayem.) i.e. God, Truth—Reality speaks to Himself, "I was one and desired to become many and I produced my self in various forms of creation".

This mantra fully explains the principle of unity in diversity. Truth is one, God is one and Its manifestations are many. This visible world is the playground of Purusha and Prakriti—nature. The existence and activity of nature is for the realisation of the true divine nature of Spirit. As it has been emphatically said in Sankhya philosophy:—

वत्सविवृद्धिनिमित्तं यथा क्षीरस्य प्रवृत्तिरज्ञस्य ।
पुरुषविमोक्षनिमित्तं तथा प्रवृत्तिः प्रधानस्य ॥
अौत्सुक्यनिवृत्यर्थं यथा क्रियासु प्रवर्त्तते लोकः ।
पुरुषस्य विमोक्षार्थं प्रवर्तते तद्वदव्यक्तम् ॥

(Vatsa vivriddhi Nimittam yatha Kshirasya Pravrittirajnasya
Purusha vimoksha Nimittam tatha Pravrittiḥ Pradhanasya.
Autsukya Nivrityartham yatha kriyasu pravartate lokaḥ,
Purushasya Vimokshartham Pravartate Tadvadavyaktam.)

As inert milk functions for the nourishment of calf, so does the nature functions for the liberation of the spirit.

As people engage in action for relieving desires, so does the unmanifest for liberating the spirit.

An individual self is a combination of spirit and matter. Spirit is one and matter is many. Matter is abode of spirit. Spirit and matter both are inseparably linked. Every individual is potentially divine and for the realisation of its divine nature he requires material objects. Desire is the very characteristic of individual self. Every desire ceases when it is being fulfilled completely as ripple caused by throwing stone in a pond subsides when it reaches the shore. Desire is energy. It is not to be suppressed or discarded in order to get rid of it. It is to be understood and sublimated and individual desire is to be transformed into the desire of all for the all. We start from desire and by understanding and fulfilling it ultimately we reach the state of desirelessness. This state of desirelessness is the state of complete liberation—the state of Nirvana, the state of Godliness, the state of perfection. Atman is described in Atharva Veda very beautifully in a charming and sweet manner:—

अकामो धीरः अमृतः स्वयम्भू रसेन तृप्तो न कुतश्चनोन ।
तमेव विद्वान् न विभाति मृत्युरात्मानं धीरमजिरमयुवानम् ॥

(Akamo dhiraḥ Amritaḥ svayambhu rasena tripto na Kutschanon. Tameva Vidvan Na Vibhati mrityuratmanam Dhiramajiram Yuvanam) i.e. Atma —reality is desireless, motionless, immortal, self-existent, completely satisfied within Himself, great and perfect. Realising that immortal, ever fresh, ever new Atman man conquers death and attains immortality.

Therefore the Rishis—seers of Upanishadas have directed man, individual self not to discard but to enjoy the objects of nature with the spirit of renunciation in detached manner. It has been enjoined on man not to be greedy. He is allowed to take and enjoy from the storehouse of the riches of the world according to his requirements. He is forbidden to hoard more than what he requires to keep his body and mind fit. He is also prohibited to have vulture eyes on the wealth of others. One should not have the spirit of possessiveness. The idea of individual ownership is to be renounced. Lord is alone the owner of all the riches of the world. We are to enjoy worldly things as his gift, not as an owner.

Performance of sacrifice in daily life has been highly esteemed and glorified among the Aryan people. Sacrifice was the pivot around which the structure of social and individual life of the Aryan race was built. The true meaning of sacrifice is to give others, to think and act for the welfare of others. The idea of sacrifice has been very beautifully mentioned in Rig Veda:—

य: नार्यमणम् पुष्यति न सखायो केबलाघो भवति केवलादी ।

(Yah naryamanam Pushyati na Sakhayo Kevalagho bhavati Kevaladi) i.e. The man who does not feed worthy people, friends and relatives and eats alone, verily he eats sin. He is a sinner. This idea of sacrifice has been developed in Gita, Chapter III.

यज्ञशिष्टाशिन: सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्विषै: ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापं ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥

(Yajnashishtashinaḥ santo muchyante sarva kilvishaiḥ, Bhunjate te tvagham Papam ye pachantyatma karanat.)

Those who eat only what remains after distributing and feeding others in sacrificial performance are released from all sins and those who cook only for themselves and eat alone without offering to others eat sin.

Activity originates from desire. Desire is to be classified as good and bad. Bad desire which does harm to oneself and others is to be abandoned and good desire beneficial to oneself and others is to be harboured and fulfilled. Action is required for the fulfilment of desire. Nothing can be achieved without action, and because activity is inherent in nature and man is a creation of nature, so he cannot live without activity for a single moment as it has been clearly stated in Gita:

नहि कश्चित् क्षणमपि यातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ।।

(Nahi Kaschit Kshanamapi yatu tisthatyakarmakrit.
Karyate Hyavasaḥ Karma sarvaḥ Prakritijairgunaiḥ.)
Nobody can sit without doing work.
All beings are drawn into activities by qualities of nature.

Therefore, in the second mantra Rishis emphatically exhort the mankind for action and command that man should desire to live hundred years, the full span of life only by doing work, but every act should be done with the spirit of dedication to the Lord in complete detached manner. The second mantra runs thus:—

कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविशेत् शतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ।

(Kurvanneveha Karmani jijivishet shatam samaḥ, Evam tvayi nanyatheto'sti na karma lipyate nare.) i.e. Doing verily works in this world one should desire to live a hundred years. Thus it is in this and not other than this; Action does not cling to a man done in the spirit of dedication.

As science and technology go together in the material world for the benefit of mankind, so the knowledge and action go together in the spiritual world for attainment of supreme truth and bliss. Action must originate from the understanding of this principle of unity of all beings. Such action becomes true Dharma which does not harm anybody, but paves the path of salvation for mankind. From this realisation of oneness of the spirit residing in all selves the higher social values flow. The sole criteria of our conduct or behaviour in society should be that nobody should be hurt physically or mentally by our words and deeds. The essence of Dharma has been proclaimed in the great epic of Mahabharat by Yaksha to King Yudhishthira. The Yaksha said to the King, "Oh King, hear the essence of Dharma and after hearing, practise it in your daily life. That you should not behave with others as you do not want to be behaved by others". This Truth has also been proclaimed by Lord Christ in his famous Sermon on the Mount: "Friends ! whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, Ye even do to them, that is the law and the prophet". This is the eternal law of human behaviour and of attaining peace and harmony in individual life and maintaining peace and goodwill in society. The great principle of live and let live comes out of this realisation of oneness of spirit in all beings. This royal path has been shown by our Rishis—seers of Upanishadas for the salvation of mankind.

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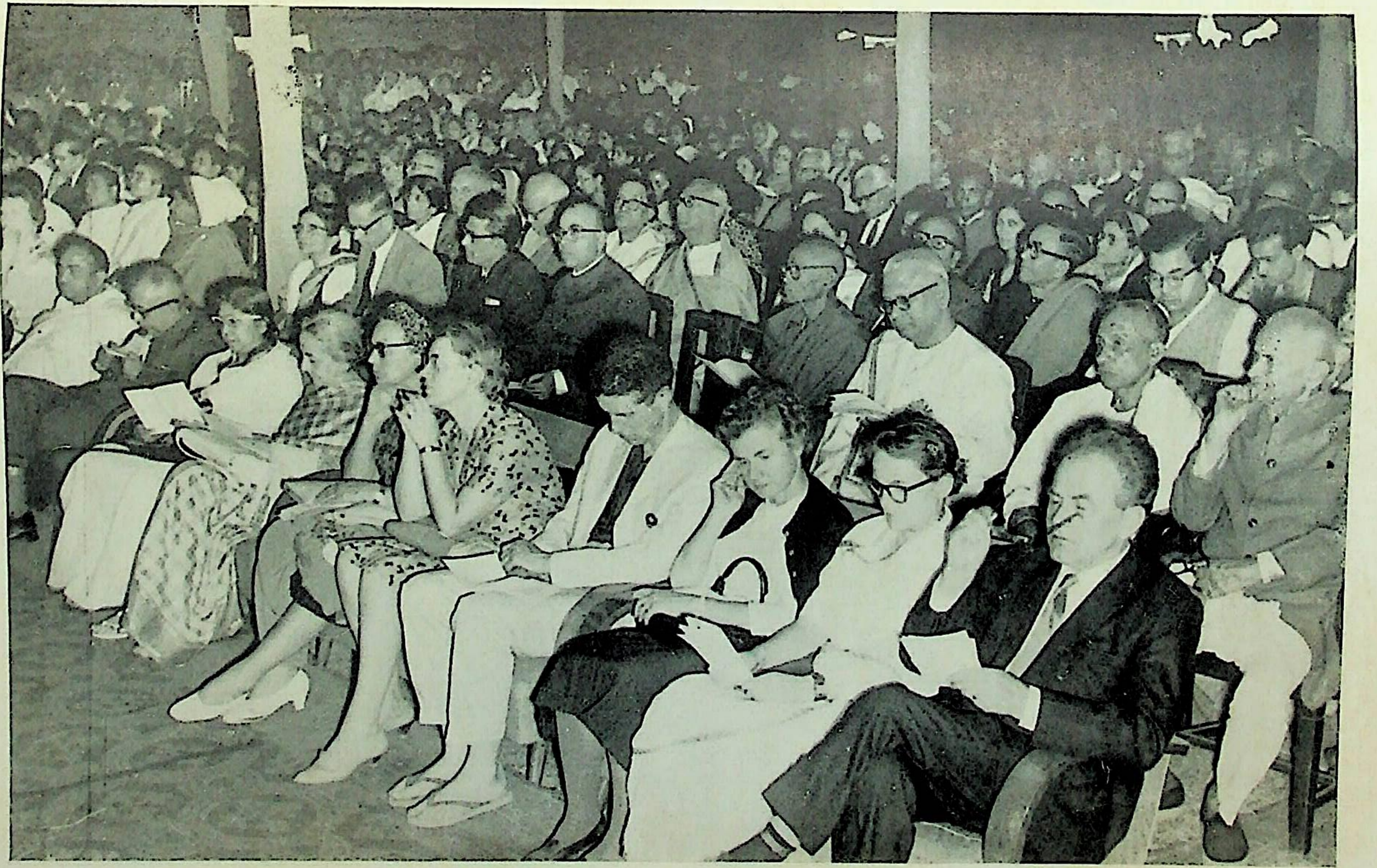

A section of the audience at the Parliament of Religions in session, 1963-64.

THE INDIAN FATHER-GOD AND MOTHER-GODDESS

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The age covered by the composition of the Rigvedic hymns is considerably wide. It is therefore no wonder, considering the popularity of the union of Aryan males and non-Aryan females, that the speech as well as the social and religious life of the Aryan peoples began to be modified as early as that age. We may draw attention in this connection to the borrowing of the cerebral consonantal sounds from non-Aryan speech, to the speedy modification in the conception of the Rigvedic god Rudra and to the germ of theism, a non-Aryan institution later completely adopted in Indian (i.e. mixed Aryo-aboriginal) religious life, to be traced possibly in the Rigvedic reference to the Sūris (sectarian devotees of the god Vishṇu according to later works) as a class favoured by Vishṇu. It is interesting, however, to note that, while the pre-Aryan father-god was in the process of amalgamation with the Aryan god Rudra even in the early Vedic period, the absorption of the pre-Aryan Mother-goddess in the orthodox religious life of the composite Indian population took a considerably longer period of time.

The objects unearthed at the prehistoric sites of the Indus valley prove the prevalence of the cults of the Father-god and Mother-goddess among the pre-Aryan peoples of India. The Mohenjodaro people worshipped a male god who has been regarded as the prototype of Śiva. He is represented as seated in the *yoga* posture, surrounded by animals, and has three visible faces with two horns, one on either side of a tall headdress. His ithyphallic characteristic is also very marked. This apparently explains the later conception of Śiva as a *yogin* styled Paśupati, his *liṅga* being specially important and his attributes being three eyes and a trident, probably associated respectively with the three faces and the two horns together with the headdress. Some stone pieces looking like the Śiva-liṅga of later days have actually been discovered at Mohenjodaro. The *liṅga* of the Father-god or Creator was worshipped apparently as a symbol not only of creation but also of virility.

The objects found at Mohenjodaro include many figurines of the Mother-goddess and point to the wide prevalence of her cult. Such figurines, discovered from prehistoric as well as later sites in different parts of India, are usually nude, but wear a peculiar headdress, a wide girdle and a quantity of jewellery. A prehistoric terracotta seal from Harappa contains a presentation of the same goddess who is shown upside down with her legs wide apart and a pant issuing from her womb. There is also a pair of tigers towards her left, standing and facing each other, and this reminds us of the association of the lion with the Indian Mother-goddess and of the Father-god's association with animals.

The fundamental idea of the Mother-goddess cult was the belief in a female energy as the source of all creation. The prehistoric people of the Indus region appear to have also worshipped the *yoni* as the symbol of this goddess just as they adored the *liṅga* of the Father-god. Certain ring-stones discovered at Mohenjodaro have their upper and lower surfaces undulating, while, in some others, the lower surface is flat but the upper one has a quatre-foil form. Marshall regards these as representations of the *yoni*, the female organ of generation symbolising Motherhood and fecundity. *Yoni*-rings of later date have been found from various other sites. Certain disc-like objects, usually with well-carved decorative designs, have been found at Taxila and Rajghat and have been associated with the *yoni*-cult.

The Rigveda refers in a deprecatory manner to a class of people called *śiśna-deva* or phallus-worshipper. Whether they were Aryan or non-Aryan in origin cannot be determined; but there is no doubt that the orthodox section of the Rigvedic Aryans disapproved of the phallic cult. The Aryan god Rudra (literally, the howling one, but essentially the spirit of the stormy clouds) was conceived as causing diseases, even though he was sometimes regarded as the healer of them. Rudra's interesting epithet *Paśupa* (protector of animals) seems to point to his rapprochement with the pre-Aryan deity worshipped at Mohenjodaro as also does the fact that, in the later Rigvedic age, some people spoke of his gracious sovereignty. In the Śatarudrīya section of the Yajurveda, Rudra's benign form is distinguished from his malignant appearance, and the god 'lying on the mountains' (Giriśa) is called the heavenly physician, the wearer of matted hair (Kapardin) and the lord of paths, forests, cattle, forest tribes and outcasts, thieves and robbers. He is also called Śarva (archer), Bhava (benign), Śambhu (beneficent), Śiva (auspicious) and 'the wearer of tiger-skin'. Thus the conception of a terrible destroyer as quite its opposite resulted from partially an attempt at appeasement by flattery and partially perhaps due to his gradual amalgamation with the pre-Aryan Father-god.

The Rudras, in the plural, are called Gaṇa (a tribe) and also leaders of tribes (Gaṇapati) and of workmen, potters, cartmen and carpenters and Nishādas who were proto-Australoid forest tribes. The Atharvaveda refers to Bhava (called Rājan, the archer and the protector of the Vrātyas or outcasts), Paśupati, Ugra, Rudra, Mahādeva and Īśāna as distinct forms of the god. Śarva and Bhava, called Bhūtapati and Paśupati, are requested to remove their deadly poison to other places, and this reminds us of the serpent-garland of Śiva as known from the Purāṇas. In the Śūlagava sacrifice mentioned in the Gṛihyasūtras, a bull is prescribed to be sacrificed to appease Rudra outside the limits of a village. This shows that the god was not exactly within the orthodox pantheon apparently owing to his association with non-Aryan tribes. He is called by the names Hara, Mṛiḍa, Bhīma and Śaṅkara, and one is directed to adore Rudra at the time of traversing a path or a junction of four roads, of passing by a heap of dung or a creeping serpent, of being overtaken by a tornado and of coming to a variegated scene, a sacrificial site or an old tree. The *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, which is earlier than the *Bhagavadgītā* (c. 3rd century B.C.) and contains speculations closely approaching the Bhakti cult of later days, calls the god *Bhagavat*, the Greal Soul and also Maheśvara, in whose power stands Māyā and Prakṛiti. It is also said that, knowing Śiva who is minuter than the minute, the creator and protector of the universe, the one having many forms and the one alone encompassing the world and concealed in all beings, the *Brahmarshis* become free from all nooses and attain eternal peace. The god is further said to be the one unchangeable principle that existed before creation.

The earliest exposition of the Pāśupata doctrine is found in the *Atharvaśiras Upanishad* which is, however, not a very old work. The Śiva-bhāgavatas of Patañjali's *Mahābhāshya* (originally composed in the 2nd century B.C.) were no doubt the followers of the Pāśupata-vrata mentioned in this Upanishad. Thus the pre-Aryan Father-god, amalgamated with Vedic Rudra, gradually came to be, as Rudra-Śiva, a great force in the composite religious life of India long before the birth of Christ, although, even in later times, his non-Aryan origin and association were remembered and often pointedly mentioned, e.g., in the legend about the destruction of Daksha's sacrifice. The said story suggests that the influence of Śiva, worshipped by the pre-Aryans, was great enough to overcome the reluctance of the orthodox Aryan element in the society and to occupy a front seat in the Indo-Aryan pantheon in spite of opposition.

The pre-Aryans appear to have conceived the Mother-goddess as the consort of the Father-god. But, in the Vedic literature, the Mother-goddess is rarely referred to. The *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* mentions Ambikā (a name of the Mother-goddess) as Rudra's sister, and she is sometimes also represented as the god's mother. In connection with the Śūlagava sacrifice in honour of Rudra, the Gṛihyasūtras speak of the wife of Bhava apparently as a subordinate deity. The *Kena Upanishad* gives a story in which Umā Haimavatī (daughter of the Himavat or Himālaya) discloses the nature of Brahman (possibly Śiva) to the gods. But she is not called Rudra-Śiva's wife. Ambikā's mention as Rudra-Śiva's spouse in the interpolated tenth section of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* is of course rather late. Thus, in the age covered by the

Vedic literature, when the non-Aryan Father-god was considerably near the front rank in the orthodox Indian pantheon, the worship of the Mother-goddess does not appear to have been popular with the upper classes of the society. Even if she made any progress towards recognition, that was possibly as a subordinate to Śiva whose relationship with her was variously expressed.

The above position may have been due mainly to the fact that the cult of the Mother-goddess was originally unknown to the Aryans who were a patrilineal people unlike the matrilineal aboriginals. Even in the early centuries of the Christian era, when the *liṅga* cult was being widely popularised among the people of different classes (although the bigger phallic emblems were gradually being made symbolical by removing their realistic feature which was apparently disliked by the orthodox) and when the appearance of Ommo (Umā, from the Dravidian *Amma* meaning the Universal Mother) on the coins of Huvishka proves the growing importance of the Mother-goddess in the religious life of the Indian population, Sakti seems to have been subordinated to Śiva by the upper classes of the people who, moreover, practically ignored the worship of the *yoni* as the symbol of the goddess. Certain *tīrthas* containing *yoni* tanks are no doubt mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*, but *yoni* worship is prescribed only in late medieval Tantra works which were not universally favoured by all classes of the society. This particular cult was specially disliked by the orthodox upper classes.

That Śiva's status in the religious life of India during the early centuries of the Christian era was practically the same as it is today is proved beyond doubt by the representation of the bull (i.e. Śiva in his theriomorphic form) on an Indo-Scythian coin and that of Śiva in his anthropomorphic form on the pre-Christian Ujjain coins and on the monetary issues of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. such as those of Gondophernes and the Kushāṇas (the ithyphallic characteristic of Śiva or Harihara on a coin of Huvishka being specially remarkable), the discovery of innumerable symbolical phallic emblems of Śiva dating from about the beginning of the Gupta age (although certain realistically made *liṅgas* such as the one from Gudimallam and their representation on coins like those from Ujjayini have been assigned to dates prior to the beginning of the Christian era) from various parts of the country, the description of a large number of Indian rulers of different areas as exclusive devotees of the god Maheśvara or Śiva in records dating from the 1st century A.D., the mention of ten generations of Pāśupata *āchāryas* in a Mathura inscription of 381 A.D. and the abundant evidence of the epics and the Purāṇas. But the case of the Mother-goddess, in spite of her growing popularity with different classes of the people as suggested by Huvishka's coins, seems to have been different.

Certain sections of the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas like the *Mārkaṇḍeya* no doubt suggest that the Mother-goddess, conceived as the consort of Śiva, was nearing the front rank about the age of the imperial Guptas (4th to 6th centuries A.D.). But even in the period following that age, we very often find her associated with and apparently subordinated to Śiva. Thus certain early medieval kings of Kāmarūpa claim to have been devoted to Kāmeśvara (Śiva) and Mahāgaurī (Kāmākhyā) even though the most important deity worshipped in the region was Kāmākhyā. Hiuen-tsang mentions Bhīmādevī of Gandhāra in association with Mahādeva worshipped by the Tīrthikas or Pāśupatas. It is well known that the Kāpālika sect of the Śaivas worshipped Śakti in Śiva's association. The Śulkīs of Orissa, although their family deity was Stambheśvarī (Mother-goddess worshipped in the form of a pillar), claimed to have been exclusively devoted to Maheśvara. There are many references to the worship (usually by the aboriginal population) of particular forms of the Mother-goddess such as Vindhyavāsinī mentioned in the *Harivaṁśa* (c. 3rd century A.D.) and Vākpatirāja's *Gaüḍavaha* (8th century A.D.). Jālandhara (Jvālāmukhī), Uḍḍiyāna (in the Swat valley), Kāmarūpa, Śrīhaṭṭa and Pūrṇagiri were regarded as the greatest seats or *Pīṭhas* of the Mother-goddess in works dating from the 8th century A.D. Śiva was, however, usually worshipped along with Śakti at these places in a form styled Bhairava.

But the gradual increase in the importance of the Mother-goddess is also sometimes indicated by her installation for independent worship. In the 5th century A.D., the Maukhari chief Anantavarman established the images of Bhūtapati (Śiva) and Devī in a cave in the Nagarjuni hills in the Gaya District of Bihar, while, in another cave, he installed an image of the Mother-goddess styled Devī, Bhavānī, Kātyāyanī and 'the one overpowering the demon Mahishāsura'. It should, however, be remembered that the Maukhari chief was a worshipper of both Śiva and Śakti and not of Śakti alone. An inscription of 491 A.D. in the Bhramaramātā temple at Chhoti Sadri near Neemuch records the construction of a shrine for Devī represented as the consort of Hara (Śiva) and also as forming the left half of her husband's body.

The 'Divine Mothers', often associated with Mahāsena (Kārttikeya) as in the epigraphic records of the Early Kadambas and Chālukyas, are also known to have been collectively adored. The construction of a temple for them, described as 'the terrible abode, full of Ḍākinīs (female ghouls), of the Mothers who utter loud and tremendous shouts of joy and who stir up the very oceans with the wind rising from the *tantra* or magical rites', by a royal officer for his religious merit, is referred to in a Mandasor inscription of 423 A.D. Another early temple of 'the Divine Mothers' is known from the Deogarh rock inscription of about the 6th century A.D.

It should, however, be remembered that the kings of the Gupta age and their successors are usually represented as the devotees of Maheśvara, Śambhu, Āditya, Sugata, Buddha, Tathāgata, Bhagavat (Vishṇu), Vishṇu, Varāha, Chakrapāṇi, Narasiṁha, etc., and we rarely find kings who were exclusively devoted to the worship of the Mother-goddess before the age of the Gurjara-Pratihāras (8th to 11th centuries) of Kanauj. Of this family, Nāgabhaṭa II, Bhoja I and Mahendrapāla I claimed to have been devotees of the goddess Bhagavatī. But neither Śiva nor Śakti has been completely free from aboriginal association, though the latter bears the stigma to a more considerable degree even today.

FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF THE VEDAS

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The four Vedas ('Books of Knowledge') or Saṃhitās ('Collections' of mantras—stanzas or prose unit) form the basis of Śruti or 'revealed' literature (also called Veda in the wider sense). They are the Ṛgveda (10,552 mantras, all in verse), the Sāmaveda (1,875 mantras, almost all of which are selected from the Ṛgveda for musical rendering), the Yajurveda (Vājaseniya Saṃhitā, 1,975 mantras, in verse and prose, with many Ṛgvedic mantras, meant with some exceptions for recitation at rituals), and the Atharva Veda (5,987 mantras including some prose), also known as 'Brahma-veda', the Veda of prayer, having no reference to rituals (some portion of the Veda has a form of prayer which has often been described as a spell). The Atharva Veda too has a considerable number of Ṛgvedic mantras. Whatever the form, there is the same spirit breathing through all the Vedas.

The text of the Vedas has come down from remote antiquity for more than three thousand years by the process of oral transmission, a unique phenomenon in the cultural history of the world for such a large body of literary material.

Vedic poetry is marked by high intensity and powerful melody, and delicate rhythm emphasised by the use of accents. At its best the Vedic language carries the impression of perfect harmony between form and spirit. The successful oral transmission of the Vedas owes much to the memorableness of the text.

The Veda has described itself as *Viśvarūpa*, omniform, dealing with all aspects of reality and life. It contains fundamental ideas of religion and philosophy, some of which have been expanded and developed in later ages. There are also ideas that are found to be more explicitly and emphatically presented in the Vedas than in the extant literature of later ages. Again, there are ideas which in the symbolic and figurative style of the Veda take the mind deeper than their logical exposition in later literature can do.

Let us consider some of the fundamental Vedic ideas.

(1) *The Unmanifested Absolute.* The Veda speaks of the unmanifested Absolute, the impersonal and 'unqualified' Divinity, in terms almost all of which have survived to this day, and are used in the same sense. These terms include *akṣaram*, the Eternal, *ekam*, the One, *tat*, That, *sat* and *tat sat*, the Real (the ultimate Reality), *brahman*, the Supreme Being—all in the

neuter gender and singular number. There is also the indeclinable Om, the monosyllabic name of the Absolute.

Examples:

> There was neither existence nor non-existence then,
> Neither the world nor the sky that lies beyond it...
> There was neither death then nor immortality...
> The ONE breathed airless by self-impulse;
> Other than That was nothing whatsoever. (RV)
> That, verily, was Supreme in the universe. (RV)
> The sage Vena saw That Reality which is hidden in mystery, and in which the universe finds one single home. (YV.Vs)
> Om, the Supreme Brahman. (YV.Vs)

(2) *The Absolute Manifested on the Relative Plane as Devas.* The Veda speaks not only of the unmanifested Absolute, but also of the Absolute manifested on the relative plane of existence—the personal and 'qualified' Divinity, called 'Deva', the Shining One. While the unmanifested Absolute is attributeless, the manifested Absolute as Deva has attributes, and a good many of them, all based on values. The Veda states three fundamental values: Ṛta (Eternal Order, Cosmic and moral; eternal Law), Satya (Truth, as integrity and as reality) and Tapas ('kindling the spiritual fire', the discipline of the spirit on the animal nature of man). (RV) The Ṛgveda says that in the beginning of creation 'Ṛta and Satya were born of (i.e. manifested through) blazing Tapas'.

The Veda entertains all visions of the Deva, reflecting beauty and glory, goodness and truth, in the universe and man. The Deva is contemplated in the masculine and the feminine gender, and in the singular, the dual and the plural number, but along with this the identity of the Deva with the Absolute is asserted, often in a direct way, as in—

> 'When the earliest of the mornings dawned, the Great Eternal (*mahad akṣaram*) was born (manifested) in the path of light. Now the statutes of the Devas will be revered. Great is the single divinity of the Devas.' (RV. III. 55.1)

That the birth of the Devas has not to be taken literally is evident from the fact that the Veda sometimes speaks of two Devas being born of each other: e.g. 'Dakṣa was born of Aditi and Aditi was born of Dakṣa' (RV. X. 72.5). Devas are sometimes said to be born of Ṛta (e.g. in RV. II. 23.15, reproduced in YV. Vs., Bṛhaspati is said to be *ṛtaprajāta*, 'born of Ṛta'). Sometimes a Deva is identified with Ṛta and Satya. An Upaniṣad states the Vedic position when it says: 'THAT has been called Ṛta, THAT Satya, and THAT the supreme Brahman of the sages' (*Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, 1.6).

The Devas have been said to be thirty-three, and multiples of this number. But they are as many as can be contemplated within the limits of Ṛta and Satya, and the stainless purity produced by the blazing spiritual fire (Tapas) ['The Devas are always stainless', as the Sāmaveda says (SV. 442)]. The Deity, says the Atharva Veda, appears in a billion forms:

> Such is Thy greatness, liberal Lord ! a hundred bodily forms are Thine. Millions are in Thy million, or Thou art a billion in Thyself (AV. XIII. 4.44-45).

The Veda emphasises the idea of the single divinity of the Devas in a number of ways:

(i) It identifies the Devas with the One (*Ekam*). 'They speak of Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni', says the Ṛgveda, and there is the divine Garutmat. The One Ultimate Being (*ekam sat*) the sage-poets speak of in many ways, as Agni, Yama, Matarisvan' (RV. I. 164.46; AV.). And elsewhere : 'The Deity who is one the wise poets shape with their words in many ways' (RV. X. 114.5).

(ii) The Veda not only identifies a Deva with the Absolute but also speaks of him as the Supreme Being, all-pervading and all-powerful, and as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, e.g.

> Praise him (Indra) who, the One truly, was manifested ('born') as the Lord of the races of men...
>
> Again, the sole Emperor...
>
> Varuṇa, the Deva, the Emperor sublime ... who illumines both the worlds with his majesty and power...
>
> Soma, thou transcendest heaven and earth, thine are the stars and planets and thine the sun.
>
> Viṣṇu, the One, who upholds the three-fold—the earth, the sky and the worlds of living creatures...
>
> We invoke Pūṣan, the Supreme Ruler, the Lord of the moving and the still world...
>
> This Savitṛ's own supremacy, most glorious and beloved, none can diminish,
>
> We call for our aid Aditi, the Queen of Eternal Order (Ṛta), the powerful Ruler... (RV)
>
> Come together, you all, to the Lord of heaven, the only one...to him all pathways turn, he is the One (SV).
>
> There is no parallel to him (Indra) whose glory, truly, is great (YV. Vs).
>
> Varuṇa is That in which things converge, and from which they diverge, he is of our own land, he is of foreign lands, he is human, he is divine (AV).

(iii) Another way in which the Devas are shown to be different forms in which the sages have contemplated the Supreme Being is to describe each Deva in superlative terms. For instance, Agni is called 'the best of sages' (*kavitama*), and the same superlative is applied to Varuṇa and Savitṛ, too. Similarly, Agni is called 'the most heroic (*nṛtama*) and so is Indra. Again, Indra is called 'the mightiest' (*tavastama*), and so are Agni and Rudra. Sarasvatī is called 'the most beloved' (*priyatamā*), and so is Agni called (*preṣṭha*). Indra is 'the most beneficent' (*śivatama*) and so is Agni (*śantama*).

(iv) An even more significant method to indicate that the Devas are not really separate individuals (as in polytheism) is to identify one Deva with another, or with all the rest, as in—

> 'I, Varuna, am Indra';
>
> 'That, wise Ones, is your great and lovely trait that all you Devas exist in Indra.
>
> 'Agni, thou art Indra, ... thou art Viṣṇu ... thou art Brahmaṇaspati ... thou art Varuṇa ... thou art Mitra, Aryaman ... Aditi, thou art Bharatī, Ilā ... Sarasvatī'.
>
> 'We, with our hymns elect today Savitṛ who is All-Devas-in-One (*visvadeva*) (RV).

Sometimes the Vedic sage speaks of a Deva or Devī in a way that shows that he refers not to the manifested but to the unmanifested eternal Being. Take for instance, Aditi, the Devī (literally, the Infinite) and Savitṛ, the Deva (literally, the Impeller, also the name of the sun, in a non-symbolic way):

> 'Aditi is the sky, Aditi the midregion, Aditi is Mother, is Father, is Son; Aditi is all the Devas. Aditi the five-classed men; Aditi is all that is born and that will be born. (RV., YV., AV)'.
>
> 'He (Savitṛ) is Aryaman, he is Varuṇa, he is Rudra, he is Mahādeva. He is Agni and Sūrya ... He is the One, the One and Sole ... He is not called the Second, the Third, the Fourth or the Fifth; nor the Sixth, the Seventh, the Eighth, the Ninth or the Tenth ... He is the One and the One Alone. In him all the Devas become the One Alone.' (AV).

(v) Even if, in view of the many forms, the Devas are taken as a multiplicity, they will be found to be a multiplicity bound together by unity. The Veda compares this unity to that of a group of dancers, (*nṛtyatāmiva*, RV. X. 72.6), who are bound to each other by unity of purpose and action. The Veda has a special term for this unity in diversity—Sanjñāna, unity through inner harmony, loving concord.

> 'Let your minds be of one accord, as the Devas of old, being of one mind, accepted their share of oblations' (RV). 'I will make a prayer for that concord among men at home by which the Devas do not separate nor ever hate one another' (AV).

It is not strange that, holding the view of Devas as described above, the Vedic sages should find themselves at liberty to invoke one or several or all Devas at a time, or, having invoked one Deva, should close the hymn by a refrain calling upon all the Devas. For instance, we often come across hymns to Indra and Agni, Indra and Varuṇa, Agni and Vāyu. There are dual Devas like Aśvins, and multiple Devas like Maruts, who inspire very fine poetry. Quite often all the Devas (*Viśve Devāḥ*) are invoked together. Refrains like—

'May you (Devas !) with your blessings always protect us' and

'All is good that the Devas, in their loving protectiveness, do'—

affirm that all the Devas are good and beneficent, singly and together. Hence the prayer to one or more Devas means the approach to one or more visions of the Divine. The Veda very clearly states:

'All your names, Devas, are venerable (*namasya*), laudable (*vandya*), and adorable (*yajñīya*). (RV)

As the term God of other creeds corresponds to the Vedic Deva, so, according to the Vedic tradition, the God of every creed, though called by a different name, has been accepted as adorable. This is the Vedic basis for the belief that all religions are fundamentally true.

It should be noted that there was only one form of ritual accompanying the Vedic prayer—the offering of oblation, on fire kindled for the purpose though the Devas were different. In the rituals, therefore, the worshipper found a visible demonstration of the unity of the Divine.

(3) *The Loving Deva and the Loving Worshipper*—In the Veda we find a clear distinction in the attitudes to the unqualified Absolute and the qualified Absolute as Deva. For instance, the beginning of the universe has been spoken of in two different ways,—as the manifestation of the unmanifested Absolute and as the creation of the Deva:

Darkness was concealed in darkness there and all this was indiscriminate
chaos;
That ONE which had been covered by the void through the might
of Tapas was manifested. (RV)
In love thou (Indra) madest the dawn glow, in love thou madest the
sun shine. (RV)

The relation between the worshipper and the Deity in the Veda is one of deep love. 'May thou, Agni, be easy of access to us, like father to son', is a prayer in the Ṛgveda. The Veda, however, does not limit the loving relation only to that between father and son. It contemplates the Deity not only as Father but also as Mother (e.g. Aditi, Sarasvatī), as Father-and-Mother-in-One (e.g. Indra, and Agni), and as a mother-like Virgin (Ushas: 'We are of thee as sons are of the mother', RV). The Deity has also been addressed as Brother, as Friend (*sakhā*), as Guest (*atithi*: 'He is Aditi, Infinity, among the Revered Ones; he is Atithi, Guest among the people', RV, YV-Vs; 'Really, he is the One Guest of the people', SV). He has been called Son, and also described as the Child (Śiśu)—whom 'the sages kiss with their hymns'. The Deity has also been spoken of 'as the Lover to the beloved, as the Bridegroom to the bride', as the master to the servant (*dāsa*). Sometimes by an analogy of peasant life the Veda describes collective musical prayer:

> 'They call thee, Indra, like mother cows lowing together to their calf' (RV).

The Vedic worshipper regards the Deity not only as King (*rājā*), but also as Sage [He 'is supreme among those dedicated to holy life, the holy sage' (*vipra*; RV)], as Poet ('He, Poet, cherishes manifold forms by his poetic power . . .' RV), and as Physician (*bhiṣak*) and attaches to him other titles too.

The names of Vedic Devas and Devīs are sometimes descriptive, e.g. Brahmaṇaspati, Bṛhaspati, the Lord of prayer; Prajāpati, Lord of created beings; Pūṣan, the Nourisher; Viṣṇu, all-pervader; Savitṛ, impeller, vivifier; Tvastṛ, builder; Viśvakarman, architect; Indra, subduer, conqueror; Varuṇa, the all-pervading One; Mitra, friend, etc. (RV). Some names are personifications of abstract terms, e.g. Aditi, meaning, the infinite; Vena, love; Mṛtyu, death; Manyu, wrath; Śraddhā, faith (RV); Kāla, time (AV), etc. There are other names—and these are numerous—which are personifications of ideas and objects associated with worship, e.g. Ilā, prayer (name of a Devī); Vāc, Word of the Veda (the supreme Power; the hymn to her is still recited in the prayer to the 'Devī', Śakti or Power personified); Brahman, prayer (through Vedic hymns), representing the Ultimate Being (this term is commonly used in the Upaniṣads); Agni, the sacred fire at the worship; Soma, the juice of the plant of the same name offered at worship, etc. (RV). (These belong, more specially, to the figure of speech called metonymy). Some names indicate a mythopoetic approach to nature, but are charged with a spiritual significance and, like those of other Devas, stand for the Supreme Being, e.g. Uṣas, Dawn; Sūrya, Savitṛ; Dadhikrā, the Sun; Vāyu, Vāta, the Wind; Aśvins (dual Devas), possibly, Twilight; Heaven and Earth (dual Deities), Āpas, Waters; Parjanya, Rain; Sarasvatī, a holy river, generally signifying the Power of knowledge; Prithivī, Mother Earth, etc. In fact, the natural phenomena serve as symbols for the divine names. Sometimes the divine idea is perfectly clear, but not the natural phenomenon, as, for instance, in the case of Aśvins. Maruts (Stormwinds ?), 'spotless young gallants' and Ṛbhus, skilful artists, are considered by some to have been men who attained the status of Devas after death by achieving perfection in their lives. Suparṇa, the beautiful-winged (Bird), is a highly symbolic name for the Ultimate Reality ('The Suparṇa is One, the wise poets with their words figure him in many ways', RV). Then there are Puruṣa, the Person; Hiraṇyagarbha, Child of Glory (RV)and Skambha, the Pillar or Prop, the Support of the universe (AV)—all names of the Divinity manifested (partly) in the universe in all his splendour and power.

It will appear from the foregoing that the terms 'nature-worship' and 'polytheism' have no relevance to the Vedic Devas. It should also be noted that the Puranic versions of these Devas generally fail to preserve their nobility and dignity.

(4) *The Indwelling Spirit.* The Veda approaches the Divinity not only as the all-pervading Existence, but also as the indwelling Spirit. The Deva, called Sūrya (the Sun), is described as 'the Ātman, indwelling Spirit, of what moves and what stands still' (RV). The Atharva Veda speaks of the Supreme Brahman as the great Spirit (*yakṣam*) within the universe. The AV also speaks of the Ātman living with the spirit in man. Sometimes Ātman implies both the soul of man (*Jīvātman* of later literature) and the Divine Spirit [*Paramātman* (Oversoul)]. The Ṛgveda speaks of the Jīvātman and the Paramātman dwelling in the human body as 'two beautiful-winged birds, friends knit together by love, that have attached themselves to the same tree, of whom one eats the sweet fruit and the other, not eating, looks on all.' (RV). This highly significant analogy has been drawn upon by later sages and philosophers. The Atharva Veda describes the Ātman as 'desireless, firm, immortal, self-existent, contented with the essence, lacking nothing—the Atman, serene, ageless, youthful'.

(5) *Divinity in man.* As Devas are Manifestations of the Absolute on the relative plane, so is man within the limits of mortal life and earthly existence. Man's mortality, however, refers to his body, his soul is immortal, So there is the prayer: 'Release me from mortal life like the (ripe) cucumber from its stem, but not from immortality' (RV). Elsewhere men are addressed as 'sons of immortality (*amṛtasya putrāḥ*) who inherit celestial regions' (RV). Again, this immortal soul of man is found to exist in loving friendship with the Paramātman in the same body. It is not surprising that the AV should speak of the body too as something very beautiful, by comparing it with the most admired flower of ancient India, the lotus (*puṇḍarīka*): 'The nine-portalled (body) of man is a lotus, enclosed within triple bands. The spirit that abides with the Ātman within it, is known to those who have known Brahman ('the all-pervading Being'). Elsewhere the AV, speaking mythologically of the creation of man, says: 'When they had fused the mortal man complete, the Devas entered into him ... This is why one who knows thinks of man, 'He is Brahman' (AV. XI. 8.13, 32).

(6) *Need of Sanjñāna among men.* With this noble concept of man, the Veda naturally thinks that men should be bound to each other through harmony and loving concord (*Sanjñāna*) like the Devas. The Veda preaches Sanjñāna in all human relationships. The prefix *sam-*, corresponding to Greek *sum-*(*sym-* in the English form as in 'symphony'), Latin *cum* (*com-*

or variants of it in English, as in 'companion', 'concord') implies the coming together of people and forming a loving unity (like the uniy of movement in collective dance, as said by the Veda about Devas). The Veda values friendship. 'For one who deserts a wise friend there is no grace even in the holy Word (vāc),' says the Ṛgveda. Man and wife pray at the close of a marriage ceremony in the RV seeking Sanjñāna: 'May the Devas ... join our hearts together ... and unite us both'. The AV combines the blessing: 'Join this couple, Indra, like a pair of chakravāka birds' with the husband's poetic assertion to the wife: 'I am song (*sāman*), thou art verse (*ric*), I am the sky, thou the earth'. The ideal of Sanjñāna for a family is that of a small republic:

> 'The union of hearts and minds and freedom from hate I will bring you. Love one another as the mother-cow loves her newly born calf. Let son be loyal to father; let wife speak to husband sweet and gentle words. Let not brother hate brother, nor sister hate sister. Unanimous, united in aims, speak you words in friendliness. Be speaking sweetly to one another ... Let your water-store be common and so your food. I bind you together by a common yoke ... With your common desire I will make you all have one aim, be of one mind, following one leader ... Morn and eve may there be the loving heart in you.' (AV)

There is a solemn call for social Sanjñāna at the close of the Ṛgveda: 'Meet together, speak together, let your minds be of one accord ... May your counsel be common, your assembly common, your minds common and their thoughts united ... Let your aims be common, and your hearts of one accord ... so you may live well together'.

The Veda wants the same concord to be established between nation and nation:

> 'Let us have concord with our own people and concord with people who are strangers to us. Aśvins, create between us and the strangers a loving unity of hearts.
>
> May we unite in our minds, unite in our purposes, and not fight the divine spirit within us. Let not the battle cry rise over large numbers of men lying slain, nor the arrows of the War-God fall with the break of day.'

The Veda extends friendship from fellowmen to all fellow-beings (*sarva-bhūta*):

> Revered One, make me strong.
> May all beings look on me with the eye of friend !
> May I look on all beings with the eye of friend !
> May we look on each other with the eye of friend ! (YV. Vs)

(7) *Conflict between Good and Evil* (Ṛta and Anṛta, Satya and Asatya). Man is like the Deva by the 'divine spirit within him', but unlike him in two important respects: his imperfection, and his mortality. 'The Devas are ever pure' (SV). They are 'attached to Ṛta and Truth (*satya*), full of light, and holy' (RV). But among men there are 'those who are opposed to Ṛta (*anṛtāh*), opposed to Truth (*asatyāh*)'. (RV). Devas, Guardians of Ṛta, 'bind the breaker of eternal Law (*anṛta*)' (RV). 'It is well known to wise people that there is rivalry between truth and untruth. Of these two, that which is true (*satya*) and straight, the Deva protects. The untrue he destroys' (RV).

So the conflict between Ṛta and Anṛta is the conflict of good and evil. These are often described by the prefixes *su-* and *dus-*, respectively, as in—

> 'Bar me, Agni, against evil conduct (*duscarita*), engage me in good conduct (*sucarita*)' (YV. Vs).
> 'Agni, Deva, who knowest all rules of conduct, lead us by the right path (*supathā*) to happiness. Remove from us the sin (*enas*) that takes us astray.' (RV).
> 'May we follow the path of goodness (*svasti* i.e. *su asti*, good existence) as the sun and moon follow their path' (RV).
> 'May my mind will what is good (*Śiva*)' (YV).
> 'Varuṇa, Lord, . . . may there be goodness (*sam*) in our rest and in our labour' (RV).
> 'Dear to the Deva is he who performs good acts (*sukṛt*)' (RV).
> 'May we have the good, loving mind (*sumanas*) all our days' (RV).
> 'May we know aright both truth and falsehood' (RV).
> 'May the purposes of my mind be true (*satya*). May I be guiltless of the least aggression. Universal Devas, bless us' (RV).
> The expression of penitence emphasises the sense of moral values:
> 'Release me from sin as from a band that binds us. May we make thy spring of Ṛta flourish, O Varuna ! (RV). It was through want of strength that I went astray. Have mercy, Lord, have mercy on me . . . Through want of thought we violate thy Laws' (RV).
> 'If, Varuṇa, we have sinned against the man who loves us, or against a friend, or against a comrade for ever, or against a brother or neighbour who is always with us, or against a stranger, release us from that sin committed by us' (RV).

The last makes it clear that the Veda has no double standard of conduct, one towards people belonging to one's own fold, and another towards those who live outside it. (Cp. 'Varuṇa is of our own land, *sandeśya*, Varuṇa is of foreign lands—*videśya*'. (AV).

The earth is pleasant to the man who lives the good life: 'Sweet blows the breeze for him who lives by Ṛta (the eternal Moral Law); the rivers pour sweets for him'. The Muni, the spiritual man, is, according to the Veda, 'a comrade of every Deva in doing good (*sukṛtya*)' (RV). The Deva is the Model (*pratimāna*) for man, calling him to a pursuit of noble aims:

> 'I have risen with life, risen with good life (*su-ayus*), following the example of the immortals', says a Yajurvedic sage.

(8) *Ṛta and Satya as Kṣatra and Brahman.* Goodness, according to the Veda, has to be pursued not only individually but also collectively. States (*rāṣṭra*) were formed on the basis of the combined pursuit of Ṛta or Dharma (the word that replaced the term Ṛta in later ages). On the practical plane Ṛta became Kṣatra, the power that ruled and defended a state. One upholding Kṣatra is called Kṣatriya. The Veda speaks of Varuṇa and Indra as divine Prototypes of the Kṣatriya, whose dual function is divided between these two: 'One of these (Varuṇa) regulates mankind, differentiated as good and bad, and the other smites down unresisted Vṛtras (enemies of Ṛta)' (RV). Indra 'subdues the destructive enemy, Varuṇa with a few furthers the many (RV); the one destroys the Vṛtras in the fight, the other maintains the divine statutes evermore' (RV).

The Veda tells in a mythological way of Vṛtra, the Demon, or Ahi, the Dragon, as the sworn enemy of Ṛta, who obstructs its working in nature, and is to be fought and defeated by Indra, the divine Champion of Ṛta.

The following exhortation to fight in defence of Svarājya, one's own state (based on Ṛta) applies as much to man as to Indra:

> 'Go forward, fight and conquer ! Thy thunderbolt can't be resisted. Valour is thy strength, Indra. Strike the aggressor (Vṛtra) and win the waters (which Vṛtra prevents from falling as rain or flowing down as river), acclaiming thy Svarājya (self-dominion, the kingdom based on Ṛta)' (RV).
>
> 'Follow his example, brothers, and be heroic (*vīrayaddhvam*)' says the Ṛgveda elsewhere.

The Veda says that Manyu, the wrath against the violent aggressor, is an incentive to Kṣatriya valour: 'Flashing like fire, conquering Manyu, be thou invoked as our army's leader ! Slay our enemies, sever their acquisitions and, showing forth thy valour, scatter those who assail us' (RV, AV). While the soldier was being covered with the coat-of-mail, he was told: 'May Varuṇa (Guardian of Ṛta) make you more than sufficient, and in your triumph may the Devas rejoice' (which they do when the fight is for Dharma or the Moral Law) (RV).

Thus there were two main restrictions to warfare: it was to be in defence of Svarājya and of Ṛta or Dharma, and it was not victory alone but the right means of winning it that mattered. This was the Dharma-yuddha based on the Vedic tradition. The *Bhagavadgītā* which supports it also agrees with the Vedic view that the aggressor must be resisted even if he has kinship with us:

> 'May the Devas discomfit the enemy who wants to slay us—no matter who he is, whether a stranger or one having kinship with us.' (RV).

The question arises, is it not possible to avoid war? The Veda has given an answer. War can be avoided, and the Veda wants it to be avoided. The means to avoid it is *Sanjñāna*, unity through concord. But human nature in the raw is not inclined towards Sanjñāna. 'The races of men are great oppressors (*purudrohaḥ*)', says the Veda and prays: 'Agni, burn up the malignity that strives against us' (RV), and tells the soldier: 'Valiant be your arms so that you remain unconquered' (RV). Until human nature has been refined and ennobled, there will be violent aggression which only the kṣatra power in man can resist.

The Veda not only preaches valiant resistance to the invader, but also insists on a brave encounter with life, and the championship of good against evil:

> 'The rocky stream flows on. Move in concert, stand erect, and cross over, my friends ! Let us leave here those who are opposed to good, and cross over to powers that are blissful' (RV).

The Atharva Veda, having quoted and paraphrased the Ṛgveda stanza, adds:

> 'Becoming pure and bright and purifying, strike the strain that reaches to the universal spirit of the Devas, to achieve lustre. May we, passing beyond difficult paths, enjoy a hundred years with all our heroes' (AV).

As on the practical plane Ṛta becomes Kṣatra, so does Satya become Brahman, the pursuit of knowledge, relative and ultimate (*aparā* and *parā*), the knowledge which refines human nature and spiritualises life, making man 'pure and bright and purifying'. Brahmacarya, the systematic pursuit of Brahman, prescribed for all, is the process of Vedic education. In the initiation ceremony the pupil says: 'Now I approach truth (Satya) beyond untruth' (YV. Vs). The teacher is, as it were, his spiritual mother, through whom he is reborn into higher life. Brahmacarya is a preparation for life for both boys and girls. The Brahmacarin, having specialised in the 'two treasures of sacred knowledge', dedicates himself to the spiritual service of the world. 'Grasping the worlds together' (*lokān saṃgṛhya*; cp. *lokasaṃgraha* of the *Bhagavad-gītā*), he constantly draws them near' (AV). He becomes the Brāhmaṇa, the sage (Ṛṣi), the worldbuilder (*bhūtakṛt*). 'Becoming a child in the womb of immortality, he becomes Indra and destroys the powers of darkness' (AV). Here we find the spiritual brilliance (*varcas*) of the Brāhmaṇa set up beside the valour (*sahas*) of the Kṣatriya. The Veda desires concord between the two:

> 'I would know the land as holy where *brahman* and *kṣatra* move together in harmony' (YV. Vs).

This concord will exercise mutual restraint, Brahman will prevent kṣatra from making militarism an end in itself and kṣatra will prevent Brahman from becoming too much other-worldly.

The Ṛgveda sums up the different forces—spiritual, political, economic, military, hygienic—that must be at work to make a society survive:

> 'Enliven brahman and strengthen the intellects of men; enliven kṣatra and strengthen heroes; enliven the milch cow (representing the source of nourishing food) and put strength in the masses of people; beat out marauders and remove disease.'

Elsewhere the Ṛgveda splits up the masses of people into Vaiśyas, farmers and traders, and Śūdras, labourers. The Veda clearly states that all of them were limbs of the Divine Being (Puruṣa) (RV). The Veda recognises the creativeness of the Śūdra's work by calling him a Kavi, poet, and Dhīra, a sage (AV. III. 17.1). The Veda gives freedom to people to choose their vocation, considering each vocation, pursued through Ṛta or Dharma, to be divine.

> Various are the thoughts and diverse the callings of men. The carpenter seeks what is broken, the physician the diseased, the priest the Soma-presser . . . I am a poet, my father is a physician, my mother throws corn on the grind-stone. We pursue wealth with different plans and follow our callings as the herdsman the cattle. (RV).
>
> The following prayer seeks brilliance for all types of workers:
>
> 'Give lustre to our Brāhmaṇas, lustre to the Rājanyas (Kṣatriyas), lustre to the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra, and with that lustre, give lustre to me' (YV. Vs).

This implies that we cannot pursue lustre in isolation. So, in order that one should be a Brāhmaṇa, all others must be essentially Brāhmaṇas. That is why the Veda prescribes Brahmacarya—the path to Brahman, higher knowledge—for all growing youth—boys and girls irrespective of the avocations of their parents.

The Veda wants every member of a society to have a vocation, and to work not only for one's livelihood but also to achieve noble ends. Uṣas, the Goddess of Dawn, is associated with men's active life:

> 'Dawn has awakened the whole world and people attend to their different vocations of life: one works for Kṣatra, one for (spiritual)

> glory, one to fulfil one's high desire (*iṣṭa*), and one to earn one's livelihood (*artha*)' (RV).
> Savitṛ, Deva, has sent us forth to labour ...
> May the Dawn, flushing, move me to exertion and bear me safely over every trouble.
> Uṣas sends the busy forth, each man to his pursuit ...
> Devas befriend none but him who has toiled (RV).

The Veda condemns work opposed to Ṛta, like gambling. The gambler is advised to take to agriculture. The Veda also admires skilled work, describing, as said above, the labourer as poet and sage. In the Ṛgveda some say: We have been skilful workers (*su-a-pasaḥ*). The Veda speaks well of 'the matron who tends everything carefully', of 'the honourable ladies who are true, active workers', and of 'the woman who works and sings'. And there is the wish that the ploughman should work happily with the plough (RV).

(9) *Satya and Ṛta as Brahmacarya and Gārhapatya.* In individual life the pursuit of Satya and Ṛta takes the practical forms of Brahmacarya and Gārhapatya (householder's life), respectively. A long period of education is usually followed by marriage and parenthood. In marriage man and wife are said to be forming a dual personality (*dampatī*), literally, two masters of the home, and the wife is called upon to be a queen over every member of the family.

We have said above that man differed from Devas in two important respects: one, his imperfection, another, his mortality. The Tapas of Brahmacarya and strict pursuit of Ṛta are expected to make man more and more Deva-like. The Brahmacārin (one who has built up his spiritual personality, through the Tapas of Vedic education) is said to have 'become a limb of the Devas' own body' (RV). Man's mortality, too, is overcome on the physical plane by his leaving children behind him.

> 'May we transplant us, Rudra, in our children (RV. II. 33.1)
> May I be immortal by my children' (RV. V. 4.10).

The Veda finds that Gārhapatya, the householder's life,—lived according to Ṛta, is capable of leading to the immortality sought by the ascetic:

> 'May you two together enjoy prosperous fortune, acclaiming the Law (Ṛta) and conducting yourselves according to Ṛta' (AV).
> The wife is told:
> 'Hoping for love, children, fortune, wealth, and by being always behind your husband in his life's vocation, gird up for immortality' (AV).

The ideal son, according to the Veda, is one 'who is fit for work (*karmaṇya*), fit for the home (*sādanya*), fit for the Vidatha (religious assembly), fit for the Sabhā (political assembly) and who is a glory to his father' (RV). The Yajurveda prays:' May we be proud possessors of noble children' (Vs. 8.53).

The desire for noble progeny imposes a biological responsibility on men and women.

(10) *Attaining Heaven on Earth.* To the Vedic sage mortal life is not much removed from immortality. In fact, divine grace is shed as much on mortal as on immortal life: 'His shadow is immortality, his shadow is mortal life' (RV). Hence, if we strive well, we can create a heaven on earth. Vedic sages claim to have done that at some moments of their life: 'We have become the children of Prajāpati (Lord of Life), Devas! we have attained heaven; we have become immortal' (YV. Vs. 9.21). So, this is the great adventure of life—to attain heaven on earth and become immortal 'here and now' (*iha-adya*). Therefore, the Veda sets a dynamic ideal before men and women—not to wait for a heaven beyond death, but create one on the earth itself; to make the body of flesh grow to its fullest power and perfection and 'sharpen the intellect like a blade of iron' and to arouse the deepest powers of the spirit—the moral will and noble aspiration. The awakened man looking with his spirit (*hṛd*) at the material world finds that 'for every form of beauty and glory the Deity is the Model, his form is visible everywhere' (RV). And he wishes to see not only with the spirit (*hṛd*) but also with the physical eyes and comes to have a vision of the beauty and glory that is in nature and that at the same time reflects a reality beyond nature. That is how, in the Veda, prayer and love come to be associated with poetic ecstasy. The Divinity himself is a Poet to the Vedic poet-sage: 'The Poet (*kavi*) with his poetic power (*kavitva*) has fixed his beauty in the sky' (RV). Thus, to the Vedic sage, the glory of nature symbolises the Divine. He calls the Deva Sun, Wind, Fire, Light, etc. and asserts: 'Agni is That, Aditya is That, Vayu is That ... Light is That' and adds: 'Brahman is That' (YV. Vs).

Hence the Vedic sage contemplates not only spiritual lustre and moral excellence, but also physical power and material well-being. He discovers a glory in being healthy, strong, long lived, and in possessing full efficiency of body and mind, as the following prayers will indicate:

> 'May we see for a hundred years the lustrous Eye (i.e. the sun) arise ... May we live for a hundred years' (RV).
>
> 'May we hear for a hundred years, speak well for a hundred years. May we hold our heads high for a hundred years ... (YV. Vs.). May we know for a hundred years. May we be ... and become for a hundred years' (AV).
>
> 'May Indra give you skill and brilliance and wealth ... Bring us all things that are excellent, Indra, food and strength ... Bring us all blessings, all happiness. May the strong One give me strength' (RV).
>
> 'Indra, bestow on us the best of treasures (*śreṣṭha draviṇa*): the efficient mind and great lustre; the increase of affluence, the health of bodies,

> the sweetness of speech and the fairness of days' (RV). Bṛhaspati, born of Ṛta, give us that wonderful treasure (*draviṇa*) by which the good man excels and which, consisting of brilliance and wisdom, shines among the people and is effulgent with power'. (RV., YV. Vs).
> 'All that is weak in us, Indra, make firm.' 'Make us erect in our walk and our life.' 'May I be guiltless of the least agression" (RV).

The Veda desires the unconquered soul in a powerful body:

> 'May I have breath in my nostrils, voice in my mouth, sight in my eyes, hearing in my ears; hair that has not turned grey, teeth that have not decayed, and much strength in my arms. May I have power in my thighs, swiftness in my legs, steadfastness in my feet. May all my limbs remain unimpaired and my soul (ātman) unconquered.'

(11) *The Ritual* (*Yajña*). The Vedic ritual as an accompaniment to prayer has a speciality of its own. It supports the Vedic values and has been called Ṛta (not only as 'right' but also as 'rite'). The sages who 'first observed the statute of Yajña (sacrifice) were people 'who acclaimed the Ṛta and thought straight' (RV). A worshipper says that the libation of Soma juice has been 'pressed with the word of Ṛta, with Truth, with Faith, with Tapas' (RV). Another says: 'I make an offering of what is cleansed by heart and spirit' (AV).

The Yajña with its mass appeal was made beautiful. 'By your Yajña adorn the Deity with beauty, as they adorn a child', is a direction to the worshipper. And another: 'May your sacrifices clothe Him like a woman with her robe' (RV).

The Yajña ennobles and purifies. It is said of Soma juices that they 'flowing and active, glorify Indra by making everybody noble' (RV). A sage performing the Yajña says: 'With sacrifice (Yajña) I purify both the heaven and the earth' (RV).

It has been believed that the very sound of the Vedic hymns, called 'Sabda-brahman', the Veda as a mere succession of sounds, sets into motion blissful vibrations in the atmosphere and works for the well-being and peace of the whole world. The invocation of universal peace forms a solemn close to Yajñas.

Rituals of atonement throw light on the Vedic concept of sin, e.g. in the following words accompanying the throwing of splinters of sacred wood on fire:

'Thou art atonement for sin against the Devas,
thou art atonement for sin against man,
thou art atonement for sin against the ancestors,
thou art atonement for sin against myself.

> Thou art atonement for every kind of sin,
> the sin that I have committed knowingly
> and that I have committed unawares
> For all the sins thou art atonement.—YV. Vs. 8.13;
> (also, *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*).

These rituals and the sentiments going with them (note the reference to 'sin against man', 'sin against myself') made the worshipper return to life with a sense of liberation: 'We have conquered today and established ourselves; we are free from sin' (RV).

'May sacrifice (the ritual) thrive by (the spirit of) sacrifice' prays the Yajurveda (Vs.). There are supreme moments of life when man, trying to do good to the world, is called upon to make the extreme sacrifice—risk and lose his life. The Veda speaks of the Muni who travels along paths untrodden by man to bring happiness to people and who has to 'drink from the poison-cup in Rudra's (God of Death) company'; of the sage Dadhyac who gave his bones to Indra so that out of them he could make the thunderbolt with which to destroy Vṛtra, the enemy of Ṛta; and of 'the wise sage Yama who for man's sake did not seek (physical) immortality, but gave up his dear body for a sacrifice to be made of it' (and became a Pathmaker—*pathikṛt*—for man to a happy world beyond death). And the Veda says that the creation that was made out of love was really a grand Yajña in which the Creator Himself was the Sacrifice. He renounced, though partly, His eternity to be circumscribed within time:

> When the Devas performed the Yajña with Puruṣa as Sacrifice, spring was the butter, summer the holy wood and autumn the oblation (RV., YV. Vs. AV).

(12) *Beyond Death.* The reaction of the Veda to death is characteristic of its outlook on life and reality. First, we find a tender regard for the lifeless body: 'Cover him, Earth, as a mother wraps her child with the end of her robe' . . . 'On the spot where thou hast burnt, Agni, may there grow the water-lily, and the long grass and the leafy shrub'.

The Veda wishes that after death the dead should be 'in the highest heaven and, casting off imperfections, find anew a dwelling, and be united with a lustrous body'. It describes heaven as 'the realm where eternal lustre glows and where the divine light is set . . . the deathless, imperishable world'. In another hymn the Veda speaks of the heavenly company—'the company of those who are invincible by Tapas and through Tapas have gone to heaven . . . of those who fought contested battles—heroes who cast away their lives . . . of the ancient followers of Ṛta who, steadfast in Ṛta, furthered Ṛta . . .' (RV).

The dying words of a sage at the close of the Yajurveda (Vs) are revealing:

> 'Now my breath and spirit goes to the Immortal and this body ends in ashes. OM. Remember the deeds, my mind, remember ... Agni, lead us by the right path to happiness. Remove from us the sin that leads astray ... (From RV).
> The face of truth is covered with a golden lid. The Puruṣa (Deity) who is in the sun, who is there and there,
> I am He: OM, the eternal Brahman. (also, *Īsopaniṣad*)

There is an easy transition from the contemplation of the Supreme Being (Puruṣa) manifesting Himself in the universe and man, to the realisation by man of his identity with Him. This is the Vedic foundation for Advaita Vedanta (spiritual monism).

MESSAGE OF ZARATHUSTRA IN THE AHUMAVAITI GATHA

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According to tradition the original Avesta literature was divided into 21 Nasks (book volumes) of which only the Gathas (Divine Songs or Hymns) are available to-day in their more or less original form. These divine songs are five in number and it will not be possible for me to deal with all of them, in the time available at my disposal. I shall, therefore, restrict my observations to the teachings in the first Gatha, Ahumavaiti.

The concept of God in the Gathas is rather unique. Zarathustra addresses God as a being, having no predecessor, One who knows all that happened in the past, that is happening now, and that shall happen in the future. He wants to see God and to speak to Him. He wants God to listen to him and to answer his questions. Vohu Mano (The supreme Wisdom, the perfect mind, the unfailing love) and Asha (The Divine Spark, the Divine Law—by which the entire universe is governed—the whole truth, the righteousness) are the two supreme attributes of God through which God is manifested. That the ultimate destiny of all men is to be God-like and this state can be attained by understanding the Divine Laws by which the entire universe is governed and living strictly in accordance with the laws of Asha. The understanding of Asha, Zarathustra says, can come only through Vohu Mano (the perfect Mind). Thus Asha and Vohu Mano are closely linked with one another and each forms a part of the whole Ahura Mazda. Therefore, Zarathustra begins his first Hymn, with hands uplifted in all humility, and a prayer to Ahura (God) to grant him the blessings of Vohu Mano and Asha, and wants Vohu Mano and Asha to come to his aid. Our thoughts precede our words and actions, all good thoughts, all good words and all good deeds first generate in our mind and therefore Zarathustra lays a lot of emphasis on the acquirement of Vohu Mano (perfect—healthy mind) and repeatedly asks Vohu Mano to come to his aid.

In the beginning, Zarathustra says, Ahura (God) created the Twin Mainyus—the twin mental forces or tendencies, of which Spenta Mainyu stood for creation, life, knowledge, light, truth, righteousness and the Angre Mainyu stood for the crooked mentality, absence of creation, absence of life, absence of knowledge, absence of light, absence of truth, absence of righteousness. Neither the thoughts nor the desires nor the intelligence nor the speech and actions of these Twin Mainyus ever agree and so shall it be till the end. Zarathustra does not put Angre Mainyu

(Satan) on the same pedestal with God; but says that God is the creator of Angre Mainyu. Since one of the attributes of God is unfailing love, it cannot be His wish that His creatures should suffer. Then why has God created Angre Mainyu (i.e. the force of destruction) ? If we would ponder patiently for a while we will know that the light and darkness, wisdom and ignorance, truth and falsehood, life and death, creation and destruction are all relevant truth and one cannot exist without the other. If there were no darkness there can be no such thing as light. If there were no knowledge to acquire there can be no such thing as ignorance. If there were no death then there would be no life. If there is no creation then there is no destruction. Alexander Pope has depicted this very nicely in his dictum "All are but parts of one stupendous whole, whose body Nature is, and God the Soul." Angre Mainyu, therefore, has an important role in this universe. He is not an adversary of God but he has the unpleasant task of correcting the errant souls. If there were no punishment for deviating from the path of Asha the errant souls would never know that they are on the wrong path. In Yasua 30 stanza 8, Zarathustra says that when the retribution comes to us for not living in accordance with the Laws of Nature, through ignorance, then and then only we understand the efficacy of Vohu Mano and learn that the Kingdom of God is based on Vohu Mano and Asha.

The Laws of Asha by which the entire universe is governed are infallible and Zarathustra does not give any false hopes by undertaking to set aside any law of nature. In Yasua 30 stanza 11 when Zarathustra speaks of long suffering for the wicked and happiness for the righteous he expounds one of the infallible laws of nature. To every action there is a corresponding reaction. In electricity and hydraulics there is a law "the greater the resistance, the greater the pressure". So the more the evil thoughts, words and deeds, the greater will be the impact of misery and suffering.

Zarathustra teaches us in Yasua 29-4 to bow to God's will (Thy will be done), for He alone knows what is best for us but we frequently question God's will and His justice when we see the righteous in pain and sorrow and the wicked live in joy and luxury. This paradox can be explained if we believe in the theory of rebirth. It is admitted that there is nothing in the existing Zoroastrian scriptures regarding rebirth, but then we do not have with us all the writings and sayings of Zarathustra. Moreover, in the available scriptures there is nothing against the doctrine of reincarnation. On the contrary in the Ahumavaiti Gatha there is an indirect reference to rebirth when Zarathustra says (Yasua 46-19) that those who live according to the laws of Asha will reap their reward in the next life. A similar reference also appears in Yasua 49 stanza 11 when Zarathustra says that those who have lived a wicked life will have to return (paiti—yeinti) on account of their evil record. There is a belief amongst the Parsees that after death the soul of a dead person goes to a bridge called "Chinvad" and that if the dead person had lived a pious and righteous life on this earth the bridge widens and the soul goes in to Heaven; but if the dead person had lived a wicked life then the bridge becomes very narrow, like a sharp edge of the knife, and the soul falls into Hell. A reference to this bridge also appears in the Gathas (Yasua 46-11). Thus a soul which is not fully awakened and has not understood God and His Divine Laws nor has become Godlike, cannot go to the abode of eternal joy and peace. There is no particular place like the hell depicted in Dante's *Inferno*. The hell is right here on this earth when we see millions of soul in misery and suffering. The degree of happiness and sorrow on this earth is dependent entirely upon our own actions. Science may have succeeded in breaking the sound barrier and some day may even break the light barrier but the barrier (Chinvad Bridge) for going to the eternal abode of joy and peace can be crossed only when we fully understand without any reservations that there is only one right path and that is of Ashae "Aevo Pantao Yo Ashae" and live up to it.

The choice of Ashae must come from "free will" without any reservations and with full knowledge and conviction that Ashae is the only right path. Such a choice can come only from a perfect and enlightened mind. It is for this reason that Zarathustra does not coerce his listeners into believing what he says; but in his very first sermon (Gatha Ahumavaiti Y. 30-2) he says, "Give ear to the Highest. Look within with enlightened mind at the faith of your own selection, man by man, each one for his own self" (English translation from the Gathas by Dastur Bode and Miss Piloo Nanavatty). A similar message is repeated again in Yasua 45 when he says, "Ye who have come from far and near, use your eyes and ears carefully with regard to my Message, weight all thoughts and once and for all have independent judgement so that later insidious people may never mislead you (English translation from the Gathas by Dastur Khurshed Dabu). Zarathustra, thus, teaches us that "free will" is the birth-right of all mankind and each one is free to choose his own creed. It is perhaps this teaching of Zarathustra which influenced the Iranian kings to practise tolerance and give religious freedom to the conquered nations. It is a recorded fact that Cyrus the Great, after releasing the Jews from their prolonged captivity, under the Babylonians, not only set them free but also got their temples built from his own treasury.

While God's creation in the lower intellect group such as vegetation, insects, birds and animals is guided by instinct, so to man God has given "free will" to make his own decision. We therefore cannot blame God or fate, if we suffer due to making a wrong decision, and we must bear our pains and sorrows which come to us as a corrective, patiently. In Yasua 30, Zarathustra says that when retribution overtakes them (sinners) then God's Might and Majesty is revealed to them. It is God's will that in the end all souls should become like Him and such a state can be reached only after acquiring true and perfect wisdom, and perfect mind. To follow a right path under compulsion and without understanding is not the outcome of a perfect mind (Vohu Mano) and the moment the coercion is relaxed the hitherto subdued mind will rebel against the creed accepted and followed under compulsion.

In the Ahumavaiti Gatha (Y. 30 stanza 9) Zarathustra says, "May we be such as those who bring on this great renovation, and make this World progressive (English translation by Dr. Mills). Dr. Jivanji Mody, Prof. Barthalome and several other scholars tell us that in this stanza, Zarathustra does not speak of the physical aspect of the World but refers to mankind or humanity. Nature helps the souls of lower intellect to progress by instinct; but man is given "free will" and hence every man must try to be like those enlightened souls who are constantly endeavouring to reach perfection. In the Gathas, there is no direct mention of the Resurrection (Ristakhez) of the dead, of which we read so much in the Pahelvi texts; but it is possible that Zarathustra might have mentioned Resurrection in some of his other works that are now not available with us. In Dr. Haug's Essays on Parsis, Dr. Haug says that the idea of Resurrection appearing in Christianity, Jewish and Mohommedan religions is borrowed from the religion of Zarathustra. If this is so then the only conclusion one can draw from Yasua 30 stanza 9 is that every man has to endeavour to renovate himself and keep progressing until a stage of perfection is reached. When a soul has reached this stage of perfection there is no longer any need for it to be buried in the physical body, and sent back to the earth for knowledge and experience. Thus in this small stanza of Yasua 30, there is an explanation for every soul coming to the earth, over and over again, in the garb of a physical body and the ultimate destiny of man.

God has not left mankind in this wide world to find for himself by trial and error the path of Asha; but as Zarathustra says (Yasua 31 2 and 11) God has given every man conscience, intuition and the power of reasoning and has revealed His will through Zarathustra. If we do not listen to our conscience or give reasoning to the truth revealed by Zarathustra the only other course open to us is to learn the truths by the hard way, i.e. by pain and sorrow.

In Yasua 29-4, Zarathustra tells us "God's Will is supreme". The laws of nature are framed according to His Will. The Laws of heat, light, sound, electricity, biology etc. are divine truths and must be obeyed. Of course man is free to oppose God's Will but then ultimately he will learn the sublime truth the hard way and will deliver the lie into the hands of the truth.

In the concluding stanza of the Ahumavaiti Gathas, Zarathustra condemns those (1) who help the wicked to gain power (2) who deceive the righteous (3) who praise the wicked (ignorant) souls (4) who digress people from the right path (5) who give charity to the wicked (6) who compare the wicked with the great (6) who strive to gain power through dishonesty (8) who destroy life for pleasure and says that through Vohu Mano everlasting happiness will be given and Asha will be revealed to those (1) who instruct the living in goodness (2) who give respect to the righteous (3) who seek spiritual help through good mind (4) who endeavour to discover the aim and purpose of life on this earth through enlightenment of mind (5) who bring succour to the poor (6) who offer body and soul in the service of God (7) who bow to His Will (8) who is just in his conduct.

So the teachings of Zarathustra in the Ahumavaiti Gatha may be summarised as under:

1. That God is Omnific (all-creating), Omnipotent (all-powerful), Omnipresent (everywhere at one time) Omniscient (knower of all—all-wise)
2. That in the beginning God created the Twin Mainyus (the twin forces, the twin energies, the twin conscience) of which Spenta Mainyu is generated from a perfectly enlightened mind (Vohu Mano) and Angre Mainyu is generated from an ignorant mind.
3. That the Divine Laws (Asha) by which the entire universe is governed came from Ahura Mazda.
4. That the object of life on this earth is to learn to be God-like to reach Him and to be one with Him.
5. That the Divine laws (Asha) can be understood and God can be reached through this perfectly enlightened mind (Vohu Mano).
6. That Vohu Mano (perfectly enlightened mind) can be attained by obeying the laws of Asha (The Divine Laws) and bowing to God's will.
7. That in order to live according to the laws of Asha, one must listen to the inner voice (Voice of Conscience) and pay heed to it.
8. That salvation lies in understanding and obeying the laws of Asha, hence for the ignorant and disobedient there is long suffering.
9. That for the righteous there is immortality, and for the wicked there are misery, suffering and death.
10. That free will is the birth-right of all and each one is free to choose his own creed.
11. That when retribution comes the wicked shall understand that he is on the wrong path and will surrender the lie (the wrong way) into the hands of the truth i.e., give up the wrong path and will learn to be righteous.

12. That man is the architect of his own fate and he alone is responsible for his sufferings.
13. That Zarathustra had come to this earth by God's will to explain the indubitable truths of Asha and Vohu Mano.
14. That to support the wicked in any way to gain power through dishonest gains, to destroy life for the sake of pleasure, to deceive mankind, to be conceited and arrogant, are acts of an ignorant mind and will cause ruin and destruction.
15. That to bow to the will of God and look to Him in all difficulties and danger, to offer our body and soul in the service of God, to bring succour to the poor, to instruct the living in goodness, to be humble and just to all are acts of the enlightened mind and will give inspiring courage, lasting joy and immortality. Amen !

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the Morning Session held on 4.1.64

DR. R. C. MAJUMDAR
Calcutta

Friends,

For seven days you have listened to many distinguished speakers expounding the nature of religion and the noble role it has played in the development of individual mind and national culture, all over the world and throughout the ages. May I crave your indulgence to sing in a different tune and place before you some thoughts which have haunted me since my youth ? I have been a student of history and the stories of horrible deeds perpetrated in the name of religion all over the world throughout the ages made such a deep impress upon my mind that I have never ceased to lament, with a slight change in Wordsworth's famous line., "What religion has made of man," as I saw before me a panorama of burning of heretics in batches before an enthusiastic and appreciative crowd, destruction of hundreds and thousands of villages and massacring of tens of thousands, desecration of temples, mosques and churches in the most ruthless manner, and the terrible flow of blood to satiate the thirst of God. Was it all accidental? Is all this preventible ? My mind says, 'no'. For, there are four inherent features of religion which make these things almost inevitable.

The first is, that religion from the very nature of things, is an article of faith and belief, uncontrolled by reason, like a boat, with a sail but without a helm, victim to capricious wind. Secondly, such faith usually, if not universally, centres round a prophet or a doctrine and dogma. The third, a consequence of the second, is the belief that "My prophet or doctrine is the only true prophet or doctrine." Fourthly, the very high regard entertained for religion above everything else in human life,—for life, here on earth, is ephemeral, whereas life hereafter, whose welfare depends entirely on the pursuit of true religion, is eternal.

It will be found that on ultimate analysis these four integral parts of religion easily account for the sectarianism, bigotry, and fanaticism which, to use the words of Swamiji, "have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair". When a man kicks or cuts the throat of one who does not believe in *his* prophet or doctrine, he consoles himself with the pious thought that a little pain to one sinner in this life will save him and others from eternal perdition, and that he has set a noble example of securing eternal welfare to all.

It is all very good to say that the religion referred to above is not true, but false religion. But call it by whatever name you like, that is the only religion professed by 99 per cent. of the followers of any particular religion. Nay, more. A religion ceases to be a religion, and becomes morality or philosophy, if it is divorced from the four inherent features referred to above. They grow with the growth of religion and decay with its decline. The reason why the misdeeds of religion mentioned above are less prevalent today in some region than before, is the fact that religion itself has much less hold on the people.

This then poses a great problem—can religion be maintained without the inherent evils ? It is only possible, if the followers of different religions may be induced to pass a few self-denying ordinances. The first is to abandon the idea that one Prophet alone is the true Prophet and the rest are false. The second is to put a moratorium on the laudable programme of saving other souls, individually or *en masse*, by conversion to the 'true' faith. The third is to allow reason, if not to guide, at least to control, religion.

Nationalism, a noble sentiment in itself like religion, has created as much havoc in the world as religion. Men are now looking to internationalism as a substitute for nationalism in order to avert the evils inherent therein. Hence the League of Nations and United Nations Organization. A similar change in idea is necessary in the field of religion. What is needed today is a League of Religions or United Religions Organization. If this Parliament of Religions succeeds in turning our thoughts in this direction we may yet make some progress towards the solution of the problem of warring religions which is probably as old as human life itself.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA MAHARAJ
Vice-President, The Ramakrishna Math and Mission

On the occasion of the Inauguration of the Parliament of Religions held in Calcutta on the 29th Dec. 1963.

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Sisters and Brothers,

It is most appropriate that our Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary Celebrations should conclude with the holding of this "Parliament of Religions". It is seventy years since the Great Parliament of Religions in which the great Swami delivered his message to the world for the first time, was held in Chicago in 1893.

As a young man he had come to his Master in search of Religion. By religion he meant, as he declared later on, not doctrines or dogmas but Divine Realisation. He was in search of a religious teacher who could say that he had realised God—the Eternal Truth.

So the first question he asked Sri Ramakrishna was "Do you believe in God, Sir?" "Yes," he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir?" "Yes" "How?" "Because I see Him, just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense."

Swami Vivekananda said later on—"That impressed me at once. For the first time I found a man who dared to say that he saw God, that religion was a reality, to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world."

The first lesson the Swami learnt from his Master was—"Religion consists in realisation." The second lesson was—"That the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one Eternal Religion."

Swami Vivekananda remarked—"To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity underlying all religions was the mission of my Master." Later, Swami Vivekananda said—"I sat at the feet of one whose very life was a 'Parliament of Religions'." And the disciple, too, had embodied in his life this ideal of the fundamental unity of religions. Therefore, as I said at the beginning, it is most appropriate that Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary should *end* with this Parliament of Religions.

The religion that Sri Ramakrishna lived and preached was the religion of harmony. Religious harmony or Universalism has ever been in the main, the central theme of the Eternal Religion of India, even though, sometimes a few fanatics raised a discordant note. In his inaugural address Swami Madhavanandaji has referred to the Rig-Vedic passage, "एकं सत् विप्रा वहुधा वदन्ति". "Truth is one but sages call it by various names." This is not Polytheism—nor Henotheism—but practical Monotheism, ultimately leading to Monism. We have a similar passage in the Bhagavad-gita:

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ।।

"—Whatever path they choose, lead to Me alone. In whatever way men approach Me—the Supreme spirit—even so do I accept them." This idea is again expressed in a well-known passage of the Siva Mahimnah Stotra: "Different are the paths laid down in the Vedas, Sankhya, Yoga, and Saiva and Vaishnava scriptures; of these, some people take to one and some to another as the best. Devotees follow these diverse paths, straight or crooked, according to their different tendencies. Yet, O Lord, Thou alone art the ultimate goal of all men, as is the ocean of all rivers."

The great king Ashoka proclaimed, "He who out of respect for his own faith despises the faith of others inflicts the greatest injury on his own." Hindu universalism influenced Akbar who declared,—"Each person according to his conditions gives the Supreme Being a name." Akbar's son Jehangir held that the science of Vedanta was the science of Sufism.

In the 15th and 16th centuries saints like Kabir and Guru Nanak tried to bring about a synthesis—a harmony—between Hinduism and Islam, stressing the fundamentals of the two faiths. Kabir sang, "It is said that Hari dwelleth in the South in Banaras. Allah has place in the West in Mecca. Search in thy heart, search in thy heart of hearts; there is His abode and peace." Guru Nanak declared—"He alone is a true Hindu whose heart is just and he only is a good Mohammedan whose life is pure."

The spirit of universalism has (been) continued up to our present times. Raja Rammohan Roy stressed the fundamentals of the Vedas and the Upanishads and greatly appreciated the essentials of the Christian Bible and the Koran. After Rammohan, Acharya Keshab Chandra Sen started the New Dispensation Church which recognised the inspiration of the scriptures of all religions and creeds. In recent times Mahatma Gandhi gave expression to this spirit of universalism in clearest terms—"I believe in the Bible as I believe in the Gita. I regard all the great faiths in the world as equally true with my own."

In the world of religions there are roughly speaking, five different attitudes—(*i*) Denunciation and destruction of other religions and assertion of one's own religion; (*ii*) Toleration—While one holds one's own religion as the best, one does not condemn others and just tolerates them; (*iii*) Syncretism—People of different religious beliefs live together in a spirit of "live and let live," stressing more their common points than their differences; (*iv*) Eclecticism—An attempt to incorporate what are considered good points in other religions along with one's own, rejecting what is considered bad; (*v*) Acceptance—all religious paths are accepted as equally true paths leading to the same goal.

In India, religions are acting and reacting on one another, whether the religious leaders—the theologians—like it or not. This is preparing the way for the eventual acceptance of all religious paths as means to Divine Realisation.

Many of our Sanskrit hymns express this idea. There are beautiful temples in Belur and Halebid—places in the South, famous for their architecture. There is the following inscription on the wall of the Belur Temple:

यं शैवा समुपासते शिव इति ब्रह्मेति वेदान्तिनो ।
वौद्धा वुद्ध इति प्रमाणपटव: कर्तेति नैयायिका: ।
अर्हन्नितथो जैनशासनरता: कर्मेति मीमांसका: ।
सोऽयं वो विदधातु वाञ्छितफलं त्रैलोक्यनाथो हरि: ।

"May the Lord of the Universe, the remover of evil, whom the devotees of Siva worship as Siva, the Vedantins as Brahman, the Buddhists as Buddha, the followers of the Jaina doctrine as Arhat, the ritualists as Karma—grant us all our hearts' desires." To the other religious faiths, the above quotation has added Buddhism and Jainism, regarding them as paths leading to the same Reality.

Sri Ramakrishna has made further additions of Islam and Christianity. In our days Mahatma Gandhi included these also as means to God-realisation.

There is no dearth of ideas of religious harmony or universalism in India. But Sri Ramakrishna seems to have been the only spiritual teacher who followed the various religious paths one after another, and made this harmony, the universalism, a fact of experience in his own life, and this he declared with a new power and meaning. He says:—"I had to practise each religion for a time—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity. Furthermore, I followed the paths of the Saktas, Vaishnavas, and Vedantists. I realised that there is only one God, toward whom all are travelling, but the paths are different."

To Sri Ramakrishna, religion was the experience of the eternal relation between the eternal soul and the eternal God.

The religion of dogma divides; the religion of experience unites. There cannot be any religious harmony based on the acceptance of any particular spiritual teacher, however great he may be. It can be established only on the recognition of the one God-head who is the goal of all religions—the goal of all spiritual seekers.

The various religions are like radii leading to the same centre. They come closer to one another as they approach the centre in which they all meet. We may call that God, Allah, Iswara, Brahman, or Supreme Spirit as we please.

Sri Ramakrishna sums up his spiritual experiences thus: "I have come to the final realisation that God is the whole and I am a part of Him; that God is the Master and I am His servant. Furthermore, I think every now and then that He is I and I am He."

Let us go to the logical conclusion of the experiences. As the soul comes closer to God it comes closer to man or rather the God-in-man. (*i*) If we recognise God as our Master, Father, or Mother, we must also feel that we are all fellow servants, all children of the same God. (*ii*) If we hold that God is the whole and the soul is a part, we should feel that we are all fellow-souls—eternal portions of the Supreme Spirit. (*iii*) If we consider that the ultimate Reality is unity—the One without a second, then we, as well as all beings, are one in the Spirit. This is the source of inspiration for all forms of spiritualised service. It becomes a great joy to serve the God-in-man and thus give a practical shape to our sense of unity. Thus the religion of experience brings us closer to both God and Man and enables us to reach the highest goal of human existence.

I must conclude now. Sri Ramakrishna says, "Truth is one, Only it is called by different names. All people are seeking the same Truth; the variance is due to climate, temperament and name. Every one is going toward God. They will all realise Him if they have sincerity and longing of heart."

It is this spirit of religious harmony that was proclaimed to the modern world by the great disciple of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna—Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday centenary we are all celebrating. "I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him."

Finally, the Swami concludes,—"We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, to all that are to come in the future."

Many religious leaders and learned scholars are taking part in this Parliament of Religions. May all their lectures, papers and discussions stress that Religion is realisation, and that all religious paths, if sincerely followed, lead to the direct experience of the Supreme Spirit—by whatever name we call Him. May they fully maintain the spirit of harmony and bring the Conference to a happy and successful close.

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE WORLD TODAY

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Since Vivekananda appeared before the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in the year 1893 and proclaimed his message of the unity of religions, his teaching has unfortunately not succeeded in leaving any mark on the religious practices or in their mutual relation. Even today, the religions of the world are mostly separating factors within mankind. But now in the last few decades some basic events have taken place, which have changed the religious situation of the world. Through improved world communication the nations come in touch with one another and their religions also come in closer contact. The religions of Asia are rejuvenated and religious missionaries are sent to represent them in the West. Vivekananda was at that time the first Missionary of Hinduism in the West. Therefore, it is the task of the present time to come to an understanding about the religions.

My late academic teacher Rudolf Otto, the famous author of the book 'The Holy' prophesied more than forty years ago that some time in human history the most celebrated moment will come when not only the economic systems and group interests of the nations will touch one another but also the religions of the world will meet for mutual understanding and each religion will have to proclaim with all sincerity its deepest truths, its last teachings and also whether it contains any truth at all. As this world situation has basically changed, I find in Vivekananda that personality, whose message is specially realistic and important. I would like to attempt in short to present the basic religious ideas of the proclamations of Vivekananda, as far as I find them. Starting from the most internal essence we would like to elucidate the basic ideas which were significant for him and by doing it we shall differentiate five kinds of problems:

(1) The Divine Reality,
(2) God and the World,
(3) God and Man, Man and God,
(4) The significance of life,
(5) The unity of the Religions.

Contemplations with regard to these questions are found scattered in the works and lectures of Vivekananda.

(1) *Divine Reality:*

As is always the case with the mystic, the basic tendency of Vivekananda is to discover the Reality in the midst of the changeable world, the actual Reality. He is not satisfied with the apparent so-called Reality, which he recognises as 'Apparent Reality'. The fundamental base is only unchangeable. Vivekananda holds that there is nothing in particular excepting that Infinite. That is the only state which does not undergo any change, all others are in an everlasting stream. This is of course the ancient Indian doctrine of Atman and Brahman, as they are presented in the Vedanta. Vivekananda was renowned as a follower of the Advaita school of Vedanta: The One, that neutral One is only real. Vivekananda points out that it has already been sung in the hymns of the Veda when he says, "In all these cases where hymns were written about all these gods, the Being perceived was one and the same, it was the perceiver who made the difference."[1] We shall leave aside the question here whether this mystic interpretation of the Vedic hymns is correct from the historical standpoint. The Mystic views, usually in all forms of worship for any deity, that One alone. Vivekananda quotes also that Great Word, that 'mahavakyam,' where it is said, "That which exists is One; sages call It by various names."[2] This is, as pointed out already, the typical mystic interpretation of the varied manifold deities of India. The distinction between the personal and the impersonal idea of God in India, as it is known, has been recognised since the days of Rig Veda, 10th Mandala, wherefrom both the streams of personal and impersonal ideas of God spring forth and flow up to the modern times through all the history of Indian Religion. In Vivekananda, it appears, the ascent took place from the personal to the impersonal God. And Vivekananda finds the simple belief in a personal God in the example of Varuna, regarding whom it is said in the Vedas: "Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone, King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes are known. This earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless skies."[3] At the same time with regard to the process of dissolution of the personal deities into the neutral Eternal he says, "They (gods) all come to share the same fate—they first began as gods, and then they are raised to this conception as the Being in whom the whole universe exists, who sees every heart, who is the ruler of the universe."[4]

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[1] The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. I, p. 347.

[2] *Ibid.* page 347

[3] *Ibid.* page 344

[4] *Ibid.* page 345

From the standpoint of the history of Religions let us leave aside the question whether this idea of impersonal God succeeding the idea of personal God is right or not. This idea may be correct in the case of the mystic Religion, but in the prophetic Religion of Islam and Christianity this personal character of God is strictly maintained and never attains an impersonal or neutral character.

But that is not our objective here. We try to understand and to present the ideas of Vivekananda. Through the course of the history of Religions Vivekananda observes the prototype and the example of development of all religions: "Just after the Samhitas, the monotheistic idea with which the Samhita portion is replete, was thought by the Aryans to be useless and not worthy of philosophers and thinkers, and that they struggled hard for a more philosophical and transcendental idea. The monotheistic idea was much too human for them."[5] This means the ascent to the idea of divine 'It,' the divine neutral Being. At the beginning the wise men searched for an individual God, one personal Lord of the world and raised one popular god after the other to this position. So we find later on that they contemplated and meditated on one idea or the other in different hymns. In a distinctively individual conception that highest Being is introduced as the Basic One, upon which everything rests and stands and this original Basic One becomes everything. All attributes of the personal deity would appear now superficial. Vivekananda considered that the wise persons did not use therefore, under these circumstances, the word 'He' but 'It,' as the word 'He' might have awakened the idea of an individual, of God as a human being. According to this mode of conception which one calls the Advaita system, that 'It' is used as the form of the Impersonal. This Absolute is therefore the real existing and acting; that which 'It' produces is the world.

(2) *God and the World:*

The Brahman is the Creator of the world. Vivekananda says: I shall restrict myself to use the Sanskrit word 'Brahma' and to call by it the highest guiding (principle) of all things. Brahma is the eternal one, permanently pure, eternally awakened, Almighty, All-knowing, All-compassionate, All-pervading, formless and indivisible, He creates the universe and keeps it awakened. It is evident that Vivekananda falls back on a mode of expression denoting a personal God, but he means a neutral God, which never rests: If the creative power which reacts on us day and night will cease to act for a moment only, the whole universe will collapse into groundless nothing. Actually Vivekananda does not recognise any creation, but only an emanation; 'No creation out of nothing' as he says. There are cycles in the process of emanation: All things which exist in our natural world will in course of time become clear, purified and will give up again their power and significance and lastly, plunge in the period of absolute rest. Soon will they again be seized by the law of renewing emanation and will appear in the same form in the same line of development i.e., in the same symptom of the type of development in which they were in the past. Thus the cosmic play continues further as it started.

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[5] *Ibid.* page 345

Under these circumstances it is the duty of mankind to step forward to acquire the knowledge of the unity of all things: We shall have to come to this knowledge with regard to the unity of all things. Human beings should see themselves in all things. The connecting link is Brahman.

But at the same time this external world which in its essence is unity, i.e. divine unity, is confusing. It is the veil of Maya which covers the truth. And also to this are due the external forms of the religions. The sages taught: All longing through the senses after the ceremonies and external appearances, cover the truth with a veil and this veil cannot be removed by ceremonies. They (viz. the sages) discovered that it should come back to themselves, i.e. in their internal spirit and there they found the truth. The external world turned back and they turned themselves towards the internal (spirit): Search not after the truth in any particular Religion, it is only in the human soul.

In all religions the Evil in the world creates trouble for contemplative thought. What is the origin of this Evil in this world which in its turn originates out of the Absolute Eternal One ? How does the Evil arrive in this world ? Vivekananda thinks that if there is one Divine personal Creator, He will have the responsibility for it (i.e. Evil): No, says Vedanta, it is not the fault of God that the twofold sins (adharma) exist which bring pleasure and pain. We ourselves, our own ego deposit them, and are principally responsible for the existence of these things (viz. pleasure and pain). The mercy of God, thinks Vivekananda, is as universal as the rain; the rain acts fruitfully only when it falls upon a prepared soil. The apparent distinction between man and man is due to the consequences of the deeds of the previous existence. The idea of Samsara solves the eternal problem of long antiquity, that of Theodicy, which is not solved in other religions, viz. the problem of justifying God in contradiction of the injustice of human fate.

3. *God and Man, Man and God:*

The situation relating to the existence of mankind is Unholy. The Unholy when understood in a general sense is not to be related to a disaster but to a situation of the human being in front of the Eternal One. The structure of this Unholy is the Ego. It is the pseudo ego, which being at the centre denies the real Self and therein lies the ground of isolation from the eternal basic ground of the world. Therefore, according to the opinion of Vivekananda, the aim of all religions is the same, only the language of the teachers is different. He thinks: The necessity is to annihilate the false ego, so that the real ego, i.e. God, may be the Master. On this point Vivekananda is in accord with the Western mystic Meister Eckhart. He too teaches that by diversion from egoism and 'Mineness' one can find out the Self, the Divine Spark in the depth of the soul. Vivekananda interprets the demand of self-abnegation thus: It signifies the negation of the pseudo Self, the negation of all egoism. The very idea of 'I' and 'Mine' is the consequence of previous superstition. And the more the present little Self disappears, the more is the real Self revealed. That is to say, 'I' and 'Mine'—these are the attributes of ego and these are not the real Self but its limitation. In this connection Vivekananda links this up with the doctrine of original Sin and the Flood of the Old Testament. He thinks that there is an idea of Unholy in general: All religions without exception agree in this that the human being is a degeneration of its true nature. This situation will have to be overcome and that by different paths. Firstly with the help of knowledge,—that is one way which Vivekananda teaches. And this knowledge in its turn is classified and divided into three different forms of knowledge: (*a*) Instinct is a form of knowledge, but is the lowest stage according to Vivekananda. It belongs to the lower animals. But (*b*) Reason stands higher. It belongs to the human being. But for the reason also there is a relatively limited sphere, which it can comprehend: If the human beings attempt to transcend this limit of Reason, the reason becomes in the long run Unreasonable. And Vivekananda thinks that we must have another instrument to be conscious of the Eternal One and for that we need (*c*) Inspiration. The true doctrine must not contradict the reason.

Another path to human unity (between Atman and Brahman) and to rise above the Unholy situation is that which Vivekananda and Indian thinkers in general designate as 'Karmayoga'. And in this connection he speaks of 'Karma' and that too for the sake of 'Karma' itself. What Vivekananda teaches here corresponds to the idea of Bhagvadgita. The latter refers to the Karma which is not performed for the fulfilment of desire. The human being should act without being tied to the fruit of a karma. Through this he can come out of the compulsion of the Rebirth which is associated with greed-begetting Karma. Vivekananda also recognises manifestation of God as 'Avataras' as a path towards the unity with God: As long as we are human beings we cannot see God in any higher stage than that of the human being. The time will come when we shall pass over our human nature and see Him as He is. As long as we shall remain as human beings we are compelled to search after God amongst human beings and to worship him as man. The other way, i.e. the fourth path of connection with

God, which Vivekananda discusses extensively, is Bhakti—the relation through love between man and God: For human beings with soft and sensitive nature Bhakti-yoga is made, which represents a type of faith and life of love. Vivekananda expresses what is also found in the New Testament: God himself is love. Vivekananda thinks: It (viz. the Bhakti-yoga) is the highest form of thought which the human mind can grasp, viz. that God Himself is the God of love. Through the idea of unity of all limited things with the Eternal One, Vivekananda establishes the idea of brotherhood and the demand for brotherly help and this is in harmony with the Indian tradition: This idea of equality is the greatest which India taught. The idea of brotherhood of mankind has become in India the conception with regard to the universal brotherhood of all life, of all living beings. Thus the love does not only spring forth for the poor ones but also for the beasts, as the Eternal One is present everywhere.

4. *The Significance of Life:*

Like all other great thinkers Vivekananda has also thought over the significance of life.

He solves the problem with the help of the old Indian doctrine of Karma. The fulfilment of life consists in Karma. Every mental and physical blow that is given to the soul, by which, as it were, fire is struck from it, and by which its own power and knowledge are discovered, is Karma.[6]

Karma reacts upon the character. The human being draws the power of the Universe to himself, lets it flow into the centre of himself and then allows it to pass out again. Work belongs to the significance of life and work has its secret. We have already dwelt upon these thoughts when we pointed out the possibility of contact with the Eternal One. Vivekananda quotes from the Gita and says: Therefore says the Gita,—Work incessantly, work but do not attach yourself internally. Do not let yourself be caught in it. Preserve in yourself the capacity to detach yourself from all. Work and Rest must stay together in an inseparable relation. And according to Vivekananda Man is ideal, the ideal one who finds amidst the greatest peace and loneliness the forceful inner activity and who amidst the greatest external activity possesses the peace and loneliness of a desert.

Apart from this another contradiction plays a role in the writings of Vivekananda.

He speaks of a world to the mankind who are keen on technical progress. Already in his time the question arose whether the technical progress and the progress of civilisation of mankind could establish the happiness and could bring down the paradise upon the earth. He says with reference to this point: Only with the machines and the perfection of the basic knowledge the paradise will never be achieved. These will only make poverty greater. Without the knowledge of the All-pervading, all knowledge is only an addition of fuel to fire, only another tool for the egoistic mankind. Therefore happiness does not depend upon the perfection of the technique, which in our days has immensely triumphed, but it depends upon the contact with the divine reality. Happiness is something which everyone seeks but the majority searches it in those things which are ephemeral. The happiness is only to be found in the Pure-conscious One.

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[6] *Ibid*, page 27

5. *The Unity of the Religions:*

This is the fifth topic which we would like to deal with here and all previous considerations construct the postulates for the understanding of the central idea of the preachings of Vivekananda, viz. the unity of the religions. It is today, as pointed out in the beginning, of special importance. In view of the new religions in the world situation what matters is this that the knowledge develops further, viz. the religions are not rivals of one another but they are related to one another and it does not matter therefore whether one religion attains victory over another but that which was pointed out in the rock edict of King Ashoke. The essential truth will grow in mankind. On this topic of the Unity of religions, innumerable viewpoints occur in the writings of Vivekananda. We put them one beside the other. Firstly, it is of pressing importance at this time that Vivekananda had already thought over a central phenomenon in the outward manifestation of religion, viz. symbol and the meaning of these symbols. If man by religion understands the meeting of man with the reality of the Holy and the resulting activity of man which is determined by the Holy, then the resulting activities, especially, the symbol can be understood to have a decisive meaning. It is unavoidable and therefore writes Vivekananda: "From time immemorial symbols have been used by all kinds of religions. In one sense we cannot think but in symbols. The whole universe is a symbol and God is the essence behind."[7] Vivekananda points towards certain old basic forms of the religious symbols. We speak today about the archetypes. He thinks that there are some types of symbols in different religions and these are just the old basic forms of expression, which are used by man independently in altogether different places: "The symbols of the religions have a natural growth. Otherwise why is it that certain symbols are associated with certain ideas in the mind of every one?"[8] They come in the mind of nearly all nations unless Vivekananda thinks that every idea of mind has a corresponding form. In the symbols of our customary practices we experience the expression of the religious ideas of mankind. At this particular point the idea of the unity of religions confronts us already. In manifold as well as similar types of expression throughout all religions the deepest unity of the religions finds expression. He says: Still we shall have to learn that all religions, whatever they may be called, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim or Christian, have the same God. If some one laughs at one of them, then he laughs at his own God. Vivekananda holds that the religions have to learn from one another. This demand is also very modern, because many religions retain intentionally the old traditions and do not care to interpret their religious values in accordance with the new wisdom. There are many religions and the manifoldness of the religions is a matter of annoyance for those persons who put forth a demand of exclusive Absoluteness for their own religion. Wherefrom does it arise that so many religions are in the world ? The reason is that the religions acclimatise themselves among the various types of men: For the Hindu the different religions signify only a journey of different persons, subjected to dissimilar conditions and situations, but longing after the same aim. Here Vivekananda gives voice to a thought which is also shared by the great poet Rabinranath Tagore, who said: Cannot the different religions shine with their distinctive radiance for the different world of souls who require them ? Therefore in the view of Vivekananda the different religions are similar to different coloured glasses through which the same light radiates. He paraphrases a verse of the Bhagvadgita when he says: "God in His incarnation as Krishna says to the Hindus: I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls. Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity, know that I am there."[9]

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[7] *Ibid*, page 70
[8] *Ibid*, page 71

Vivekananda denies polytheism as a form of belief in ancient India. His opinion is that there is no such thing and it was never there. By one respective person one respective God was always worshipped and this was in extensive practice which is called in scientific terms Henotheism. But the different images of God, in their manifoldness, serve as symbols which are auxiliary means for the religious devotion. The manifoldness does not represent God but it points to God: It is proper that man tries to realise his divine nature with the help of a symbolic object of worship. Progress in the field of religion does not mean arriving at truth from errors. But it is to proceed from a lower truth to a higher truth. Therefore all religious forms of beginnings from primitive Fetishism to the highest Absolute conception of God are the different kinds of attempts of the human soul to realise the Unlimited One and to become unified with Him. That Unlimited One can only be realised with the help of related ones. These related ones are the symbols, the figurative forms of expressions which show the way to the Absolute. And therefore, the truth of religion consists, according to Vivekananda, not in correct or incorrect statements about God, but in the possibility of realising God in the soul.

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[9] *Ibid*, page 16

We arrive finally at the consequent ideas of tolerance which grows out of the knowledge with regard to the basic unity of all religions, in fact, with necessity as history has revealed. By tolerance we understand not only the apparent allowance of other religions in a country or in an institution, but the recognition of other religions as a possibility of contact with the Holy Reality. It is exactly the same which Vivekananda has also claimed: "In all these cases where hymns were written about all these gods, the Being perceived was one and the same; it was the perceiver who made the difference. That which exists is One; sages call It by various names. Tremendous results have followed from that one verse. Some of you, perhaps, are surprised to think that India is the only country where there never has been any religious persecution, where never was any man disturbed for his religious faith."[10]

Now we come back to the beginning. The topic of the religious situation of the world today is, as we pointed out, understanding of different religions with one another and the tendency of this discussion must be towards bringing the struggle among the religions to a close contact and realising the unity with the idea of co-operation amongst the religions maintaining thereby their own specialities. The existing world federation of Religions and other similar institutions serve such aims. Vivekananda, however, was the first preacher of such tendencies. Now-a-days a good amount of knowledge with regard to the science of religion has been gained, which does not contradict the ideas of Vivekananda but on the other hand, establish them. Radhakrishnan who is now the President of India and a representative of the religious thinkers has become a modern exponent of the ideas of tolerance, standing on this knowledge of the science of religion and of the co-operation amongst the religions. Although the world has changed much since Vivekananda Radhakrishnan holds that what Vivekananda wanted remains the duty of the present world: When the great religions proceed to waste their energies in fratricidal war, instead of recognising themselves as friendly partners of the highest duty, viz. promoting the spiritual life of mankind, then it is no obstruction for the quick advancement of a moralist materialism. Perhaps unconsciously the regard for the standpoints of others, the appreciation of the values of other cultures and the mutual trust upon the selfless motive, will increase. We recognise gradually that believers in different opinions and convictions need one another in order to work out a greater synthesis which alone can create the spiritual base for a world, which through the technical acumen of mankind has been joined together into an intimate unity.

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[10] *The complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, page 347

We are of this firm conviction that the healthy future of mankind depends upon the religions of the world, coming to know each other in the spirit of Vivekananda and their striving together after the great aims which are given to the whole world.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the Evening Session held on 2.1.64

MAHAMANDALESHWAR SWAMI KRISHNANANDAJI MAHARAJ
Govinda Math, Varanasi

I am extremely happy and grateful to the organisers of this Parliament of Religions that I have been given this opportunity to associate myself with the Birth centenary celebrations of Sri Swami Vivekanandaji Maharaj, who was one of the greatest sannyasins that this Holy land of Bharatvarsha has produced. It was the great credit of the Swami to have preached the universal principles of Vedanta so successfully not only throughout the length and breadth of our own country but also to the peoples beyond the seas. Never before him was the religion of the Hindoos preached so widely and so effectively to the peoples of the world at large. It was through his efforts that India regained its lost greatness in matters spiritual and it was he who made his people conscious of their precious spiritual treasures, which lay neglected for so long a time. The philosophy of Vedanta, which is the acme of Indian spiritual thought, received a new impetus at the hands of the Swami, who while explaining the high philosophy on which the system of Vedanta is based, made it practical also.

The Vedanta philosophy rests mainly on its two cardinal principles. The one is contained in the saying—*Ayam ātmā Brahma* (This Atman is verily Brahman), and the other in—*Sarvaṁ khalu idaṁ Brahma* (All that we see around us is certainly Brahman). The first principle identifies the soul with Brahman, the highest reality and asks every man to know and realize that the individual soul is none else than the Brahman Itself. This knowledge is to be attained by *swādhyāya* and *manan*—i.e. by reading the scriptures reverentially and trying to understand the true import of them through the help of keen inquiry and deep contemplation. This needs a life of discipline, ceaseless effort and constant and careful probe into the meaning of the *sāstravākyas* or dictates of the scriptures. For this, besides the study of the *sāstras*, the help of a realized soul—a *guru*—is also needed. Then, by meditation and practice, one has to realize the Truth of the *sāstras* in his own life. By doing so, the individual gets rid of the ignorance that keeps him bound and he finds himself absolutely free and immensely powerful. The puny weak individual is transformed, as it were, into a powerful identity which is one with the universal spirit. The second principle tells us that all that we see around us is nothing else than that Brahman Itself, and as such nothing but his own self. A realized soul, therefore, shorn of ignorance and limitations, feels himself one with the whole universe and for him all dualities cease. This feeling of universal oneness fills his heart with love for all beings and there is nothing that can separate him from them. Thus his love becomes boundless and he sees the reflection of his own self in all beings and things he comes across, and delights in their service.

Swami Vivekananda constantly drew our attention to these principles of Vedanta. On the one hand, he asked every man to remember his true nature and try to realize the innate greatness of his self; and on the other, he asked every one to look upon others as veritable manifestations of that Brahman and to serve them to the best of his abilities. This message of service—service as worship—has been a great lesson to mankind and we find its practice in so many spheres of our social and national life. It is again this spirit of service which works behind the numerous philanthropic activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. I have had the occasion to see some of their institutions at Hardwar, Varanasi and other places, and I cannot but highly appreciate the work that they are doing. I wish and pray that the message of Swami Vivekananda spreads vigorously throughout the world, so that all men may be happy and there may be auspiciousness all around. May these centenary celebrations help in bringing Swami Vivekananda and his teachings nearer to our hearts and may his great efforts bear more fruits. I pay my humble homage to the memory of Swami Vivekananda and thank you all for kindly giving me this opportunity to pay my respects to him.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND INDIA'S MISSION IN THE WORLD TODAY

PRAVRAJIKA ATMAPRANA

Swami Vivekananda was a man of God. Even during his youth the quest of God made him restless. During his most trying days after the sudden death of his father, he did not give up his spiritual practices but remained absorbed in them under the guidance of his *guru*, Sri Ramakrishna, till with his help he was led unawares into the realms of rare spiritual attainments.

After receiving an injunction from his *guru* not to harbour the thought of individual spiritual liberation but to work for the uplift of mankind, Swamiji became a *parivrajaka* and travelled throughout the length and breadth of India for six long years. And what did he see ? He saw that the people of this country with their vast spiritual heritage were made to believe that they were born to be slaves, born to be only 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. Swamiji was deeply moved to see the misery of the poor people. He had gone forth as a preacher of religion but the words of Sri Ramakrishna came to his mind that 'Religion is not for empty bellies' and he asked himself often, 'What have we done, we so-called men of God, the sannyasins, what have we done for the masses ?"

It was this experience and the consequent welling of compassion in his heart at the sight of suffering humanity that made him proclaim his motto to be *Ātmano mokshartharh Jagaddhitaya ca* 'for the salvation of one's own self and for the welfare of the world' and even made him go to the West to seek help for India.

Prior to his departure for America he met two of his brother-disciples and said to them, "I cannot understand your so-called religion! But my heart has grown much and I have learnt to feel. I have now travelled all over India. But, alas, it was agony to me to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and misery of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears! It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion among them without first trying to remove their poverty and their sufferings. It is for this reason —to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India—that I am now going to America."

But he was determined not to go there as a beggar. Underneath the tormented life of political dependency and material poverty he had detected a steady undercurrent of spirituality and he decided therefore to take from India in exchange the gift of religion and philosophy, wisdom and spirituality. His mission was not unsuccessful.

Swamiji came back in 1897 and the country was ready to accept his message of hope and strength. His words of command, so to say, revived the sinews of India and breathed life into her dead bones. And within five years he could bring about a revolutionary change in the life and thought of India. "From that day," as Romain Rolland writes, "the awakening of the torpid Colossus began. If the generation that followed, saw, three years after Vivekananda's death, the revolt of Bengal, the prelude to the great movement of Tilak and Gandhi, if India today has definitely taken part in the collective action of organised masses, it is due to the initial shock, to the mighty 'Lazarus, come forth' of the message of Madras."

But Swami Vivekananda had nothing to do with politics. He was able to light anew the conscience of India by touching upon its most vital point, its life-centre and that is spirituality. He reminded his countrymen that "though whirlwind after whirlwind of foreign invasion has passed over the devoted head of India, though centuries of neglect on our part, and contempt on the part of our conquerors had visibly dimmed the glories of ancient Aryavarta, though many a stately column on which it rested, many a beautiful arch and many a marvellous corner had been washed away by the inundations that deluged the land for centuries—the centre was all sound, the keystone was un-impaired." Being convinced of this Swamiji warned his countrymen not to change the course of their national life.

The history and culture of our country cannot be reviewd in terms of decades or centuries. In the hoary past, when yet the other civilizations were unborn, the Vedas declared some of the loftiest metaphysical truths which can prove themselves real in this age of science today. It is because of this that India continues to be the spiritual nursery of the world. For India to change her national ideal would be like inviting death. Swamiji exclaimed once, "And if India dies, then from this world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice."

The Upanisads mention two distinct values of life, that of *sreyas*, the eternal good, and of *preyas*, the temporarily pleasing. The former leads to the highest goal of life where man tries to curb his brute impulses and manifest the divinity within him. In Swamiji's words it leads to 'the regeneration of man the brute into man the God'. The other ideal prods the ego-centric man to remain a brute.

Our cultural and religious traditions show that we have made our choice long ago. In material prosperity or poverty we have not lost the urge to attain consciousness of infinity or longing for perfection. But today the influence of some of the dominant foreign nations seems to have made us change our ideal. We are pursuing the *preyas* ideal forgetting the *sreyas* ideal. We have relegated religion to the background and therefore even with all our increasing material prosperity and intellectual acquisitions, the world for us is only a confused mass of needs and impulses, ambitions and activities, without the control or guidance of the spirit.

When Swamiji was in the West he warned the Western nations that unless their civilizations were completely overhauled and placed securely on spiritual ideas and ideals, the entire structure would one day come down with a crash, like a tower built on sand. But when India has built on the solid rock of *sreyas* why should it change its ideal ? On the contrary, the mission of India today is to hold aloft the banner of *sreyas* ideal and teach the world that material ends cannot be gained at the expense of spiritual well-being.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the Evening Session on 31.12.63

SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA
Hollywood, Calif., U.S.A.

We are living in "one world" today, thanks to the progress of modern science. People living in distant lands separated by seven seas and thirteen rivers, as the Bengali saying goes, are like next-door neighbors, but mankind is not one world. None of us can claim that we live within the boundaries of one race, of one culture, of one religion. In fact with the greatest facilities for contacting peoples of different countries, we have become more aware of many cultures and many religions. There are plenty of people in the West who believe, and very earnestly believe, and I would say, fanatically believe that they alone have the truth. But again, there is a growing willingness to attempt some sort of sympathetic understanding of religions other than their own. I remember more than forty years back when I went to the United States, the universities and colleges had study courses for comparative religion, but at that time to my dismay I found out that their main objective was to show the superiority of Christianity over all other religions of the earth. And today I could say the atmosphere has changed, there is a serious attempt at a sympathetic understanding of every religion of the world, and I must say that there have lately been many wonderful books written to assist the students to understand. Just about a month back, the college students of Pomona College and Scripps College happened to come to my class and I found that they had a real understanding of our religion and for more than an hour, they went on asking questions, which were very very interesting.

Now, let us try to find out what basis is there upon which all religions meet together. Now there are six major religions of the world: Hinduism and Buddhism, Judaism and Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Mohammedanism. Of all these major religions of the world I might say that Christianity and Mohammendanism are militant religions in the sense that each one of them believes that he alone has the truth. Of course, I'm only talking about a class, a section of people, not the whole of Christendom. There has, as I already mentioned, come a great change in the very atmosphere but still there are quite a few who hold on to that idea that theirs is the only religion.

Not long ago there was the World Council of Churches and all the Christian ministers met together, and they were a little discouraged; they found that they were not getting many converts at the present time: so they were considering whether they should stop sending preachers to Asia and Africa, but at long last Visser T. Hooft, the secretary of the World Council of Churches took a different viewpoint; I'll quote to you what he said: "We have a new opportunity to make it very clear that we really mean what we say, and that our only motive is that the world may believe that in Jesus Christ God reconciled the whole world to himself."

Attempts have been made in the past and attempts are still being made to bring the whole world under one religion, under one banner. Fortunately, they have failed in the past, and fortunately they are bound to fail in the future. This is not the attitude of the whole of the Christian world but only of those who are preachers and ministers and fortunately again people don't listen much to them. The thinking men and women all over the world feel differently.

Now, let us try to discover the common principle of all religions. Every religion has three aspects: I. Philosophy or theology which presents the whole scope of that religion, setting forth its basic principles, the goal, and the means of reaching it. II. Mythology is philosophy made concrete; Legends and stories relating to the lives of saints and sages and of supernatural beings and so forth. III. The third aspect of religon is ritualism or symbolism.

Now, let us see if we can find any common ground in any of these aspects. Take, for instance, philosophy or theology—here we find even in one religion, all sects do not have the same kind of theology, the same philosophy, and they have different dogmas. In this connection I would like to read out to you something which I read in *Time* Magazine of December 20th. "The evangelical conservatives strive for a consistent, logical theology; their best known writers such as Editor Carl Henry of "Christianity Today," and Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Theological Seminary—challenge Barth, Bultmann, and Tillich on the ground that these men proposed as truth personal heresies and unwarranted distinctions that are incompatible with essential Biblical faith and protestant tradition."

That is not only true in Christianity, I must say, it is in Hinduism also, we have many schools of thought, and we cannot find any reconciliation or harmony if we stick to the philosophy, to the dogmas.

Now let us see if there is any similarity in mythology. Of course, here again, every follower of every religion will tell you that our legends are historical and yours are fictitious. I will not mention the name of this gentleman, who is a very well-known theologician of Christendom; I happened to meet him, and he said to me that the uniqueness of Christianity is the historicity of Christ. And I asked him what about Buddha ? And he said: Well, you know I went to Japan and I asked four Buddhist priests and they said to me that they are not very particular about the historicity of Buddha, the main principle to us is what he taught, and what he stands for. I asked him: Have you studied any of Hinduism or Buddhism? He said: No. He did not get the spirit of what the Buddhists had meant and came to the conclusion that Buddha was a myth.

Now then, let us take ritualism or symbolism. There are varied rituals. Ours are true, others are horrible or superstitious. Now, let us consider symbolism. Millions of Hindus worship Shiva lingam, and after I went to the West, I began to learn that Shiva lingam is a phallic symbol. You see, millions of Hindus worship Shiva lingam, I have worshipped and I still worship Shiva lingam, but it never occurred to us that it had anything to do with the phallus.

Again, take for instance, the sacrament of the Christians. Now when you hear that they take bread as the symbol of the flesh of Christ, and that they drink wine, symbolizing the blood of Christ, to us Hindus it might appear as cannibalism. But to the devout Christian no such idea occurs, he feels that he is communing with God. Christ now is within the shrine of his heart and he feels himself nearer to him. So you see how different misunderstandings arise, and you can never have one kind of symbolism or one kind of worship for all mankind.

Now, let us try to find out where that unity can be achieved. What is religion? The answer was given by Swamiji as a young boy when he was seeking the truth of religion. And what was that ? He goes to a minister, he goes to a teacher, and he asks: "Sir, have you seen God ?" And that is religion. To see God.

Every religion is based upon revelation. We have the Vedas, the Christians have the Bible, and so forth, and revelations mean that these truths were revealed to the great sages and saints. Now, again, it is pointed out very definitely and emphasized in the lives of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and the disciples of Ramakrishna that, to quote the words of Shankara: "Mere scriptures are not the only authority, but there must be a personal experience of the truth of God." Have you seen God? Now when we consider we find that from the Vedic age down to this present age thru the period of Krishna, of Buddha, of Christ, and of Ramakrishna, there is that one note. The seer of the Vedas declares: वेदाहऽमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं—I have known that supreme being. And Buddha: "For Brahman I know and the world of Brahman, and the path which leadeth unto it. Yea, I know it even as one who has entered the Brahman world and has been within it." When we come to Christ, we learn that he spoke as having authority, not like the scribes and pharisees. And he said: "Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free." There is one beautiful truth that Christ has expressed: "Be ye perfect, even as the Father which is in Heaven is perfect." And how is that perfection achieved? Saint Paul said: "Ye are complete in Godhead."

So this union with God, this realization of God, that is the one note that we hear thru the voices of all these great teachers and prophets of many religions of the world. Now again, in this present age, we find how Sri Ramakrishna pointed out that that is the purpose and goal of life, and religion means that. And you will find that Sri Ramakrishna not only practiced the paths as given by different sects of Hinduism, but he practiced Christianity and Mohammedanism, and came to the same experience of the truth of God, and so he could demonstrate, he could preach with authority, that "So many religions are so many paths." There is a saying that all roads lead to Rome, but Rome must be your destination. So all religions lead to that one goal, but let us not forget what that goal is. That goal is to realize God. I must see him, I must know him, I must experience him, I must realize my union with him. Hinduism and Buddhism hold on to this ideal tenaciously. इहैव न शरीरपातात् उत्तरकालम्—"Here and now, not after the passing of the body".

Now again, why is it that the saints differ in their expressions of the truth of God ? For instance, many consider Buddha as an agnostic, and Christ as a theist. Sri Ramakrishna explains how in reality all great teachers speak the same truth. Here is how he reconciles their teachings: With regard to God, he said: "Everything has become defiled thru the lips of man, but the one truth, the truth of God has never been defiled, that has never been uttered by the lips of man. Silence is His Name. "Shantoyam Atma."

There is a story of a father sending his son to learn of God. After studying for many years the son came back and the father asked him, "What have you learned of God ?" The son gave a long learned discourse on God. The father said: "No, go back, you have not yet learned what is to be learned". Then he came back after many years' study and this time also the father asked him the same question, but the son kept silent. Then he said: "Why, my son, your face shines like a knower of Brahman, you have realized Him. Shantoyam Atma." Then again, Sri Ramakrishna used to give the illustration of the bee, until it sits on the honey and begins to drink that honey, it makes a big noise.

Now, when this bee sits on the flower and begins to suck the honey it becomes silent. Then again, having drunk deep of that honey the bee becomes intoxicated and flies out and makes a sweet humming noise. When we have not come to the neighborhood of God we make big noise. Then as we sit, and as we go into the shrines of our own hearts, and begin to drink the nectar from the lotus of the heart, we become silent. Then again, becoming God-intoxicated these saints and seers make a sweet humming noise. And so, to quote again, the words of Sri Ramakrishna: "Infinite is God, and infinite are his expressions. He who lives continuously in the consciousness of God, and in this alone, knows him in his true being, he knows his infinite expressions, his various aspects. He knows him as personal, no less than as impersonal."

There is a Hindu prayer which Swamiji quoted: "They call you by so many names, they divide you, as it were, by different names, yet in each of these is to be found your omnipotence. You are reached by any of them." You may reach him thru Christ, thru Krishna, thru Buddha, thru Ramakrishna, but you know when you reach him, Krishna, or Buddha, or Christ, or Ramakrishna melts into that ocean of Sat-Chid-Ananda-Brahman.

In this connection again, I must read out to you what Swamiji has said: "The eternal Vedantic religion opens to mankind an infinite number of doors for ingress to the inner shrine of divinity and places before humanity an inexhaustible array of ideals, there being in each of them a manifestation of *the eternal one*! With the kindest solicitude the Vedanta points out to aspiring men and women the numerous roads hewn out of the solid rock of the realities of human life, by the glorious sons or human manifestations of God, in the past, and in the present, and stand with outstretched arms to welcome all—to welcome even those that are yet to be—to the Home of Truth and that Ocean of Bliss, wherein the human soul, liberated from the net of Maya, may transport itself with perfect freedom and with eternal joy."

Swamiji stated very definitely that it's a good thing that there are many sects, many religions, and in fact there should be as many sects as there are individuals: each one of us has to reach that home of truth, that ocean of bliss, in his own way, but there must be no sectarianism. And Sri Ramakrishna used to pun upon the word *dal*, scum growing in a stagnant pool. Sectarianism can never grow in a living flowing religion. Furthermore, Swamiji gave us the ideal of universality when he pointed out that the four Yogas, Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga, don't have any dogmas, they are practical ways to reach God. As Buddha sometimes used to say: "Tathagata has no theory." But you must experiment to experience the truth of God. And that was what Swamiji preached: *experiment, see for yourself*!

Now again, Swamiji gave us the ideal of a universal religion in the following words: "If there is to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time: which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and Christ, on saints and sinners alike, which will not be Brahmanic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum-total of all these and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms and find a place for every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its policy which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force will be centered in aiding humanity to realize his own divine nature. Offer such a religion and all the nations will follow you. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist become a Christian, but each must assimilate the spirit of others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to its own law, to his own law of growth."

And I must say that this truth of universality was demonstrated in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji. And those of us who are still living who had that blessed fortune to touch the feet of Holy Mother, and to associate with the immediate disciples of Ramakrishna, know how they in their lives demonstrated this ideal of universality. Holy Mother, for instance, looked upon the Christian or Muslim, Hindu or Jain or Parsee, all as her children; she made no difference also between the saint and the sinner. One time a Mohammedan devotee, who did not live a very good life, was being neglected, and Holy Mother could not stand it, and she said: "Don't you realize he's as much my son as Sarat, Swami Saradananda, the devoted disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother, and a knower of Brahman?" And she made no distinction. And we have sat at the feet of these great disciples; it never occurred to us that they belonged to any particular religion or sect, they taught us only how to find God. And in them we saw they were men of God, and that is the ideal. I'd say we don't have to remain a Hindu, or a Christian, a Buddhist, or a Jain, or a Mohammedan, we have to become men and women of God.

In conclusion may I ask your permission to quote from my own book, "*The Spiritual Heritage of India*". "The first systematic attempt to harmonize the many doctrines of Hinduism is to be found in the teachings of the Bhagavad-Gita, the Bible of the Hindus. By the time of the Epics many schools of thought, with varied ideas of God and Godhead, as well as varied paths, called Yogas had come into existence. These were all incorporated in the teachings of the Gita like 'pearls on a necklace'. Sri Krishna said:

"Whatever path men travel
Is my path,
No matter where they walk,
It leads to Me".

After many centuries when Hinduism came for the first time into contact with a foreign religion, attempts were made by the great teachers, Guru Nanak and Kabir, to harmonize the new Mohammedanism with the native faith, and more recently when confronted by Christianity, Hinduism has, once more, especially by the precepts and practices of Sri Ramakrishna, continued its role of peacemaker amongst the creeds.

It is perhaps natural in conclusion to emphasize strongly the age-old effort of India to reconcile different faiths. For it is probably by continuing this effort on an international scale that she is doing most to advance the spiritual welfare of mankind. To bring together against rampant evil the great religions of the world is no doubt a gigantic task, but it is one for which India has the special qualification; for, she strives for unity, not by calling for a common doctrine, but only by pointing to a common goal, and by exhorting men to its attainment. The path, she assures us, matters little; it is the goal that is supreme. And what is the goal ? It is only, once again, to realize God.

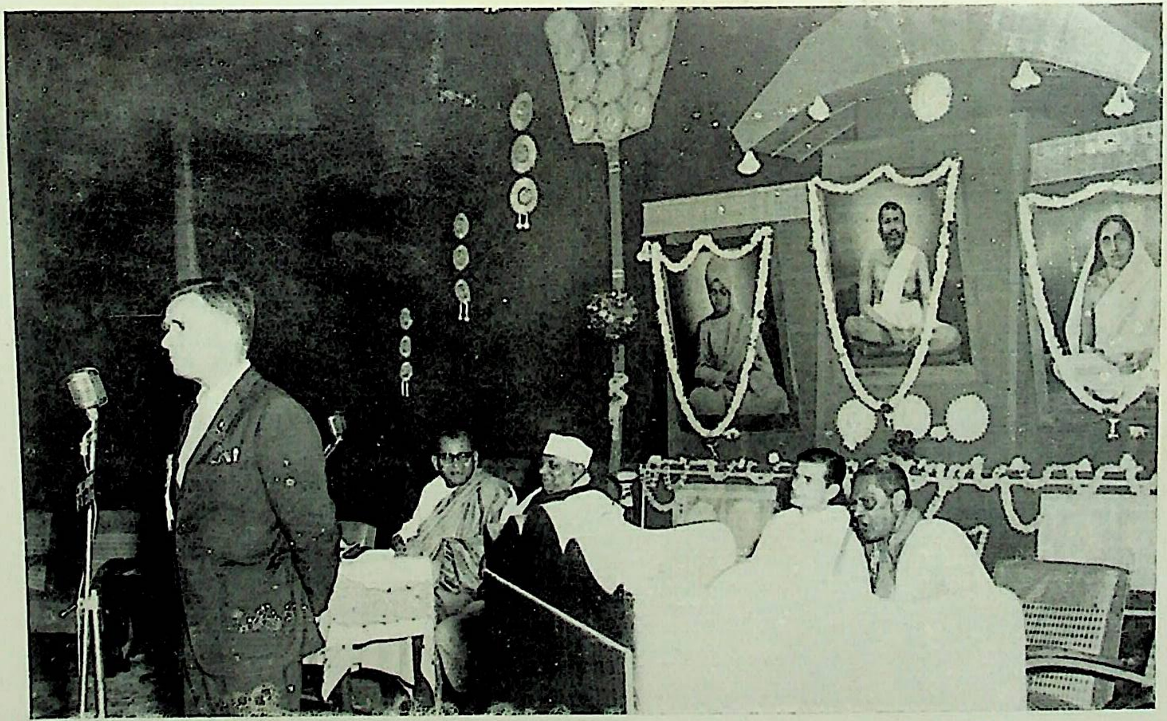
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the Evening Session on 1.1.64

Christopher Isherwood
Hollywood, Calif., U.S.A.

In the United States most of us are great joiners who like to belong to all kinds of organisations, and, in general, this holds true also for religion. People are very conscious of belonging to this church or that, and they think of themselves very much as members of a church, first and foremost. When I am asked what I belong to, I am rather at a loss. If I say I am a Hindu, this is manifestly not entirely true since the word 'Hindu' has a racial as well as a religious connotation. However Hindu I may be inside, my appearance belies my words. Again, if I say I am a Vedantist, this sounds rather cold and austere, especially to a person like myself who is not primarily philosophical or intellectual in bent but rather, as most writers of fiction are, an intuitive and emotional person. So I naturally have to say that I am neither primarily a Hindu nor a Vedantist but a devotee of Shri Ramakrishna.

Then, again, deeply as I admire and greatly as I am proud to be even indirectly connected with the remarkable achievements of the Ramakrishna Math or Mission, I am necessarily primarily a devotee rather than a member of this great organisation, since after all I live in a far outlying outpost of it away over in America. And so I am drawn very strongly to other devotees of Shri Ramakrishna who have been, as it were, a little outside the group, who have been as it were individualists, and of all these devotees the one who was peculiarly sympathetic to me, the one whom I liked since I first read about him, and the one who gave great reassurance and inspiration was Girish Chandra Ghosh. A couple of nights ago I made a pilgrimage to the Star Theatre and while the auditorium and the outside of that theatre and the foreyard have all been re-decorated—if you go to back stage—as those of you who know—you see some glimpses of what the old theatre must have been like, the theatre which Shri Ramakrishna used to visit, the theatre where to this day the actors before going to stage bow before his picture—and when you go back at the stage at the Star theatre there are these old paintings probably done not long after the passing away of Shri Ramakrishna and G. C. Ghosh on either side of the painting of the Goddess Kali. G. C. Ghosh appealed to me because he was, like myself, a writer, and because he was, as most writers are, shall we say, Bohemian. He was not respectable in the ordinary sense of that word. He caused considerable scandal to those who held strict views of conduct. He shocked them, and it is not surprising



Mr. Christopher Isherwood, distinguished writer of International reputation, addressing the Parliament of Religions.

that he did so. Nevertheless I loved Shri Ramakrishna very much when I read of how G. C. Ghosh arrived in the middle of the night at Dakshineswar exceedingly drunk and insisted on dancing with Shri Ramakrishna and how Shri Ramakrishna far from being shocked, far from reproving him, danced with him, and how Shri Ramakrishna again and again treated Girish with utmost indulgence and humour and affection, and how Girish gradually under the influence of the love and tolerance of this extraordinary man changed, and yet even in changing remained very much himself, very much the picturesque, flambuoyant individual he had always been. This relationship between Girish and Shri Ramakrishna, the relationship of the devotee to the Guru appealed to me enormously and still appeals to me. Shri Ramakrishna is, of course, among his many aspects unquestionably the patron saint of the theatre and indeed to some extent of all the arts. I, as a writer, would not dare to pretend to have one part of Girish's devotion, his extraordinary devotion which saved his spiritual life. I would not even claim to have half as much talent as Girish had, nor half the capacity for drinking. Nevertheless we are kindred spirits in certain respects and it is to Girish rather than to some of the other more austere devotees that I turn for inspiration.

You see someone who deals in fiction of any kind, whether it is the writing of stories or novels or the writing of plays or for that matter poetry, is primarily interested in people, and only secondarily in philosophy. I know that this view is challenged by certain schools of writers, but, I think, wrongly: I think that in the domain of fiction interest in one's fellow human beings is paramount, and one's whole life is in some way dedicated to the study of human beings, if you are such a writer. Now what is it ? Which of human faculties does one want to bring to bear in the study of human beings? Again, primarily I would say, not the intellect, nor the reason. Primarily, one approaches other human beings through intuition and through emotion. Therefore, when a writer—when I say 'writer' I mean of course really any kind of artist—turns in the direction of religious life, he does so in terms of intuition and of a human approach. To people of this kind religion is primarily a personal relationship, of course, with some other human beings. Now this being maybe the chosen ideal made incarnate on earth, he may dwell on one of the great *Avataras*—but he will also need to meet very strongly an intermediary, somebody whom he can personally approach. Since we none of us now may have the grace of encountering Shri Ramakrishna or even any of his great direct disciples in flesh, we look for a Guru, somebody who can, as it were, hold up the power line which comes down from the *Avatara* to his devotees. Such a person I had the infinite grace, the unimaginable good fortune to meet in the person of my Guru Swami Prabhavananda—and I can say this because I know that he is not in the audience and will therefore not be embarrassed. He runs the Hollywood Centre exactly as though he were doing it under orders, as though he were the second in command there, because he always makes us feel that he is in fact only running the Centre, that in fact he only came to America entirely to obey and oblige his Guru, Swami Brahmananda. When Swami Prabhavananda was told, as a very young Swami, to go to America to assist the Swami who was then in charge of the San Francisco Centre, he said, "How can I possibly go there where I will have to teach; I cannot teach"; and one of the direct disciples of Shri Ramakrishna gave him this tremendous answer. He said, to Swami Prabhavananda, the young monk, "You have known the Son of God, and you dare to say that you cannot teach", and this sense of the link is very powerful to all of us who have the grace to associate with Swami Prabhavananda; and, of course, I know that this kind of link is felt by the devotees of all the other Gurus of the Ramakrishna Order equally. We are still very near the fountain-head. It is amazing to think how near, it is awe-inspiring to think how near we are still to Shri Ramakrishna. We think of the people who lived in the first century of the Christian Church as being almost included in the inner circle of Christ's devotees, and yet in fact we are within that first century and we have the blessing of his direct connection through the Guru. Of course, it may be said, well, it is wonderful for you if you meet somebody of this kind, if you find a Guru who is such a powerful link with a great volcano of spiritual power such as Thakur. Admittedly there are other kinds of Gurus and some of these Gurus are perhaps not quite of the same high standard as those we have had the great blessing to encounter, but nevertheless the Guru-disciple relationship, if it is properly approached, is always one of tremendous power and value in my opinion. Just as the Catholics believe that even a priest who, as one may say, happens to be a morally bad man, can still administer the blessed sacrament and celebrate the Mass, his celebration of the Mass is just as valid as the Mass performed by some great Saint, because the power comes through the sacrament and the link is forged and we are connected with that power. So if the disciple can truly see some spark of greatness in the Guru, then after all he is seeing the *Atman* in his teacher and his devotion ennobles both himself and the Guru. People who do not understand this relationship which includes many of my most intimate friends, say to me, "How can you possibly take such an attitude towards another human being, how can you possibly be uncritical admirer of another person ? I am sure your Swami is a very good man but he is not God", to which I always reply, "I am very well aware of that and I see the individual as one person and that which links him to Shri Ramakrishna as something else again". I often think that human personality is really like the weather. The sun is shining everywhere in the world; a spiritually unenlightened person is somebody who lives—shall we say in Iceland—there lies all cloud—he cannot see the sun often though the sun after all is up there, even if you can see the sun one day. However, you know that the sun is there and all that we demand from the Guru is that just occasionally we get a glimpse of the sun. Then nothing else matters. This link is precious and is the most precious thing that we can have and the relationship that is constituted is, I firmly believe, absolutely inalienable, it cannot be terminated by the death of the Guru or of the disciple, and the Guru has taken on responsibility for his disciple until the disciple finally becomes illumined.

To conclude, I would just like to tell you a story which some of you may have heard, which is about disciples and about the fact that the effect of the Guru is not always immediately apparent. At one of the Centres of the Vedanta Society in the United States which shall be nameless—all this happened many years ago—there used to be a number of old ladies who were quite remarkable for their gossiping, scandal-mongering and general malevolence, and somebody said to the Swami in charge of the Centre, "Swami, you are such a great soul and we believe in the power of Shri Ramakrishna. How is it possible that these ladies who have been coming to you for several years are all such awful people ?" Thereupon the Swami retorted, "If they had not come to Shri Ramakrishna they would all be murderesses."

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the Morning Session on 31. 12. 63

DR. MALCOLM M. WILLAY
Vice-President, Minnesota Univ., U.S.A.

The President of this session in making his concluding comments can be brief. He will not try to summarize in any detail the scholarly presentations, that have been made. Rather, he will attempt to generalize concerning the significance of what the speakers have said. It is their *meanings* and not the specific choice of their *words* that have importance, for the *words* are only the outward expression of spiritual values that are deeply rooted in all of us. "Within every man," said Swami Vivekananda, "there is an idea; the external man (and I would add—the words he utters) is only an outward manifestation." The important thing is to develop the idea and bring it forth. That, in a real sense, is what we have been trying to do in this Parliament of Religions; to develop the ideas, the ideals, that are necessary for the preservation of the world. It was this same noble effort that characterized the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. In the addresses we have heard today there has been emphasis upon *universal* ideas and upon *harmony*. The voices we have heard this morning echo the voice of Swami Vivekananda who spoke with the voice of universal religion which—as Dr. Radhakrishnan, President of India and internationally distinguished philosopher, has said—implores us to be rid of our prejudices and prepossession and believe "that the one universal God belongs to all religions . . . and everyone is trying to seek the pathway to that eternal Supreme."

As I listened to the addresses last Sunday afternoon at the inaugural session of this Parliament of Religions there kept coming back and back into my mind the magnificent music of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, which ends with a choral passage of such eloquence that it overwhelms me every time I hear it. Basing his theme on Schiller's *Ode to Joy* the great German composer developed the theme of his symphony into a mighty climax in which the vast chorus with heavenly harmonies shouts out the message of the music: "*All mankind shall be as brothers* !" Is it not understandable why this music should have pulsated through my mind ? Is it not one expression of the purpose of this Parliament, and of this session through which we have been sitting this morning ? Are we not striving, in our humble ways, to achieve a world in which pettiness, rancor, fanaticism, violence, hatred and the evils of war are banished—a world in which peace prevails—a world in which, in truth, all men do live as brothers ? In their several ways as they developed their separate topics, I think that is what our speakers were really saying to us this morning.

This is the last day of the year 1963. We are all familiar with the custom that induces all of us on the first day of January to wish all of our friends a Happy New Year. And somehow, on that one day we seem really to express the hope that not only will the New Year be a good one—we express the hope that it CAN be a good one. But why should such a hope and its ceremonial expression be limited only to one day of the year ? Is it not better —is it not in fuller keeping with the teachings of Swamiji, whose birth centenary we are now marking—that *every day* should be for each of us a new year—a new beginning in our resolution to make this world the kind of place that finds expression in the great teachings of Swami Vivekananda ?

In closing I do wish for you a good year—a year in which *every* day finds you valiantly endeavoring to lead the kind of life that is symbolized in this Parliament of Religions. And I especially thank our speakers of the morning for their contribution to this great purpose.

AN ADDRESS AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION
HELD ON 29. 12. 63

SHRI P. C. SEN
Chief Minister, West Bengal

It is with all humility that I rise to speak before this distinguished gathering of leaders to spiritual thought. It is my privilege to welcome you to this Conference, to our City and to West Bengal, and some of you, Sirs, to our country. It is a significant occasion in more than one sense. We are celebrating the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda. We are meeting at a time when the world is in quest of peace, when materialism is threatening to destroy all that is noble, all that is good, all that is godly.

Religion is more than an intellectual pursuit, something not exactly what we accept only with the consent of our mind. It is a deep conviction, an experience of life different from what we make of it on this earth. It is a transformation from darkness into light, from imperfection into perfection and truth. It is, in any form, the making of a new man by inward growth, by an invisible evolution and of being drawn into the Kingdom of God, the Creator, the Supreme Being.

But religion is also a discipline of life on earth, of purity of mind and body, of thought and deeds, of emotions and desires, of justice and power, of love and understanding. It is a process of denial of material means and yet of acquisition of truth and love, of equality of all men before God—of the brotherhood of all His children.

There has been an evolution of the form of life, of mind and matter and so also has there been an evolution of spiritual thought. There has always been one truth, though many ways to attain it. There may have been many routes and vehicles of thought, the journey has always taken to one destination—the vision of God.

Religion, therefore, is a binding force, a force for enlightenment and fellowship and not for disunity and destruction. It is a force to convert wickedness to goodness, suffering to solace, hatred into friendship and to make brothers of men, nations members of the same family.

The word 'religion' is derived from the Latin words re- and ligare, which means to bind with love and sympathy, mutual right and duties, unity with God of the inner spirit and not only the outer flesh.

Rumi, the great Persian poet-philosopher said:

"He loveth all, do thou love all,
So thy smallness shall by thee be won,
And, thou shalt gain all of the One."

The great Shankaracharya said:

"What is I and what is Thou ?
Whence are we, what for, and how ?
What the truth of all this show ?
Ponder this, my brother, now !"

The same was the theme of Sa'di:

"The Progeny of Adam are all limbs
Of but one body, since in origin
And essence they are all identical".

Wars between Christians and Muslims were not wars between Christianity and Islam, for they seek the same truth. Conflicts between Catholics and Protestants were differences over the shadow and not the substance. Communal strifes may seem for a moment to be suppressed by politico-economic strife, but the fire of hate may still be there at the bottom. Individualism may be paddled along as nationalism. Politico-economic conflicts may still have their base in the conflicts of heart, mind and soul. Racialism and greed shall have to be replaced by true wisdom and virtue, if we want lasting peace on earth.

Religion shall always be the matter for the individual to understand and practise. This is the first liberty the individual should enjoy. But every one must learn piety and accommodation, which should be a part of his education and upbringing. That, therefore, becomes the responsibility not only of the family but also of the nation. It would be a shortsightedness to ignore this basic education which makes man a man. It makes his morals, it builds up his character, it forges the nation. In a secular democracy every one should understand and respect the other person's faith and belief as much as he appreciates his literature, art and culture. All religions are good, all lead to the same goal, that is the making of man to the image of God.

Education should aim at making a better nation and better individuals and no education would be complete if it fails to make us realise who we are, what is our purpose of life, what is our relation with other people, other nations and in fact the Universe. Education should give us a basic introduction to all faiths, teach us the glory of God. A good heart is always better than a good mind.

If democracy means one for all and all for one, Democracy without goodwill, self-restraint, tolerance, service and sacrifice would be standing on feet of clay. Let us remember what the Upanishads tell us:

"Let no one say hereafter that I am
Other than thee, thou other than I."

May this gathering give us light—may truth reveal itself, let there be peace and no sorrow.

MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Pravrajika Vedaprana
Calcutta

I deem it to be a great privilege to speak at one of the sessions of the Parliament of Religions organised by the Centenary Committee, Calcutta. Attending all the meetings for a couple of days, and today looking at the audience of which three-fourths are women, I really feel overwhelmed with joy to remember Swamiji who uttered with great sorrow, 'India cannot produce that kind of women now; she will have to borrow from other nations'. Now it is high time to feel that regeneration, real awakening coming to the women folk of India for which we are indebted to that patriot-prophet—Swami Vivekananda.

The subject of discussion, this evening, the message of Swamiji is the secret of Vedanta. You had been listening to subtle intricacies of philosophy and religion for these five days. Today I shall try to present before you the vital message of Swamiji—"The whole world requires light, not in magic, mummeries, and charlatanism but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. This is why Lord has preserved the race through all vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come."

This was the unique message of Swamiji through which he united humanity by the thread of divinity within all men and women. The secret of Vedanta, which we find in the message of Swami Vivekananda, can be summed up in four words: faith—Shraddha, strength—Viryam, fearlessness—Abhi, and love. By faith Swamiji meant faith in one's own self, faith in the scriptures and faith in God. It reminds us of the story of the Kathopanishad where the father of Nachiketa suffered his son to death, Nachiketa at once cogitated in a solitary place—

बहुनामेमि प्रथमो बहुनामेमि मध्यमः ।
किंस्विद्यमस्य कर्तव्यं यन्मयाद्य करिष्यति ॥

Among many I rank the first, among many I rank the second. What purpose can there be of Death that my father will get achieved today through me ? 'वहुनामेमि प्रथमो'—the very words showed that Nachiketa had utmost faith in himself which enabled him to face death and made him a real Adhikari of the ultimate knowledge of Brahman. From this it is proved that Nachiketa did not cultivate the habit of self-depreciation or self-denunciation.

In heroic words Swami Vivekananda declared: "This is not the time with us to weep, even in joy; we have had weeping enough, no more is this the time for us to become soft. This softness has been with us till we have become like masses of cotton . . . What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills, which nothing can resist, which will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. This is what we want. . . . Faith, faith, faith in ourselves . . . If you have faith in the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological Gods and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves and stand up on that Faith".

By strength Swamiji declared strength—physical, strength—mental, strength—spiritual. The Upanishads stated 'नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्य:'—Swamiji made an echo of that Upanishadic truth—'strength is religion, weakness is sin'. We are confronted in the modern world by humanitarian programmes lacking a spiritual foundation. The characteristic teaching of Swamiji is this that spirituality is strength and that is the test of true realization. It also implies that genuine strength is spiritual and divine and is not to be confounded with brute physical might. Swamiji emphasised on the true harmony of the physical strength and mental strength which will lead to the spiritual strength in the form of self-realization.

From spiritual strength comes fearlessness. This is the watchword of all the Indian scriptures. *Abhi*—to be fearless, is the most appropriate technique through which all the problems of life are solved. Swamiji said, "It is only in our scriptures that this adjective is given to the Lord—*Abhi*, *Abhi*. We have to become *Abhi*, fearless and our task will be done".

The last word—all-embracing love, is the keynote of Vivekananda's life philosophy. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Yajnavalkya was preaching to Maitreyee, "Oh Maitreyee, we love everything in the world not for its objective reality but for subjective entity—

'न वा अरे सर्ब्बस्नै कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति, अत्मनस्तु कामाय सबं प्रियं भवति

'Love and charity for the humanity at large, is the test of true religiousness'. Swami Vivekananda was a true lover of God and observed the whole world as the manifestation of God. Swamiji stated—'We, human beings and all materials come under the one concept of existence, for we all are in it. Standing on this basis of oneness Swamiji loved and served his countrymen as well as the people of the world. Hence in words of fire, he exhorted: 'Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, would-be patriots! Do you feel ? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel millions are starving today and millions have been starving for ages ?"

About his master Swamiji used to say that Sri Ramakrishna can be expressed in one word, that is, 'LOVE' personified. Swamiji's love for the Motherland and his countrymen, his love for his Guru and his Gurubhais is really unique.

Therefore, let us all try to understand this glorious message of Swamiji, for if we can understand a little of his message that will ennoble our character and will instil in us great strength and vigour so that we may become the worthy children of our Motherland. This Centenary Celebration will be over within a few days, but if we have true love and regard for Swamiji, should we not come forward to carry that banner being inspired by his clarion call to the young men and women of India ? So on this auspicious occasion let us pray to that patriot-prophet of India to bless us to be the worthy children of our Motherland.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

MR. JUSTICE SANKAR PRASAD MITRA
Calcutta

I am indeed grateful for this opportunity given to me to participate in the deliberations of the Parliament of Religions convened under the auspices of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Celebrations Committee. Conscious, as I am, of my ignorance and consequent limitations, I feel hesitant to address this distinguished gathering. To my mind, however, the summoning of a Parliament of Religions to celebrate the Centenary of the birth of Swami Vivekananda is the most apporpriate method of paying our homage to the patriot-saint of our motherland who occupies a foremost position amongst the liberators of our country from her social, economic and political bondage. In the words of Rishi Aurobindo, "Vivekananda was a soul of puissance, if there was one, a lion among men but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative mind and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something lionine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, "Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his motherland and in the souls of her children."

The heritage of India is the heritage of pursuit of the worthiest objects of human life; the pursuit of purity and devotion, of love and humility, of selflessness and service, of knowing the mighty force ruling the destiny of men and nation and of resignation to the Divine Will. The Rishis and Sages of ancient India had always considered this pursuit to be superior to anything that the external or material world could offer. Vivekananda had made this heritage a part and parcel of his life inspired by his Guru, his preceptor, the object of his worship and devotion, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

Sri Ramakrishna with his magnificent life of spiritual realisation was a perfected soul who had illumined the path of the spiritual evolution of his disciples, his followers and all those who had the good fortune to see him or to come in contact with him. He delved deep into the spiritual and demonstrated one by one by his intuitive experiences the incontrovertible truths behind the entire wisdom of the past preached by the World's ancient seers and prophets. He, it was, who without any formal education or initiation into the great philosophies either of the East or of the West, had realised through his Sadhana or spiritual practices that the diversity of appearances which we call nature was but manifestations of the same Divine Reality.

Before Ramakrishna's spiritual vision had unfolded the superb oneness of the universe towards which all knowledge, all realisations, all religious faiths and beliefs, all sciences and philosophies were converging. Standing on the solid foundation of his rich and varied experiences in his eternal search for Truth, he realised that all the creeds, Hindu, Islamic, Christian or of any other denomination, based on monism, qualified monism or dualism or pluralism, are but distinct paths leading to the same goal, namely, the realisation of God, the final and the ultimate cause of the Universe.

The Vedic seers in the pre-historic era had chanted "Ekam Sad Vipra Vahuda Vadanti"; Truth is one, sages call it by different names. The advent of Sri Ramakrishna was necessary in our country in the 19th Century to remind us of this heritage when religious passions and prejudices were debasing the fundamentals of spiritual life and existence with serious repercussions on the social structure as a whole. India was in dire need of this spiritual rehabilitation which eventually showed the way to her social, economic and political emancipation.

Vivekananda was the foremost among Ramakrishna's disciples. Ramakrishna had charged him with the sacred duty and responsibility of carrying the message of oneness of the Universe, of the human spirit and the human race not only throughout the length and breadth of this country but to the Western World as well. Sri Ramakrishna's intuitive vision had chosen the right man for the right task.

This is not an occasion to deal with the manifold qualities and achievements of this great disciple; but when we celebrate the centenary of his birth and start thinking retrospectively the realisation naturally comes to us that his preachings, if we chose to implement them, can go a long way to solve our domestic problems and the problem of world peace.

For our internal problems of social and economic justice and equality and of national integration we need not seek inspiration elsewhere. To the solution of the problem of world peace as well we can make a most significant contribution.

About 15 years before the First World War, Swami Vivekananda paid his last visit to the Western World. With his prophetic vision he sounded a note of warning against the rising tide of materialism, of materialistic dogmas and doctrines, against the feverish race for lust, gold and earth-grabbing. He embraced western science; he hailed scientific inventions, discoveries and achievements directed towards amelioration of the miseries of mankind and the raising of the standard of living of the common man; but at the same time he preached the spiritual messages of India, the gospels of love, faith, righteousness and goodwill. He emphasised the development of a spiritual power which was capable of establishing peace, harmony and concord among mankind. He entreated people to live the life based on realisation of the Divinity in man and the essential spirituality of life, the eternal message of India to afflicted humanity.

The First World War came, manifested itself in remorseless savagery and ultimately saw its end. The League of Nations was established and it was proclaimed that through the League permanent peace would be achieved. But preparations for the Second World War started with the termination of the First. The Second World War was also enacted on the world's stage threatening human civilisation in all its aspects. That War also came to an end and the world has seen the emergence of the United Nations Organisation. But despite the U.N.O. the present age is known as the age of the cold war, the Atom Bomb and the guided missile. In other words, these World Organisations have not solved yet the problem of world peace.

Those who believe in Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have, therefore, to take upon themselves the special task of propagating to the world the dynamic teachings of the Vedanta; the inherent Divinity in man, the unity of soul—the common substance of humanity, the dominance of the spiritual over the material and the deepening of the spirit of comradeship between man and man, nation and nation. Vedanta carried to its logical conclusions and applied to the modern world means the gospel of one race and of one world. This is the gospel Ramakrishna and Vivekananda realised in their own lives through varied spiritual experiences, through deep concentration, meditation and Samadhi. It is the flag of this gospel that the soldiers of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement all over the world must fly and bear with courage and determination and plant firmly on the soil of this earth. Let the doctrine of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, of direct realisation and experience, of synthesis and harmony, of reconciliation and acceptance, of universal love and service, of peace and righteousness, inspire each and every one of us assembled here in this Parliament of Religions.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

At the Evening Session on 4.1.64

Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar
Vice-Chancellor, Annamalainagar

To few persons has it been given to effect such an upheaval in men's minds as was attempted and successfully carried out by Swami Vivekānanda who passed away at the age of 39 and who devoted less than ten years to public discourses and the organisation of the Rāmakrishna Maṭh. Within that brief period, he compressed literary activities embodied in eight volumes of his Complete Works and he achieved a phenomenal amount of travel, public speaking and personal instruction. Born in a pious middle class family the Swami whose natal name was Narendranāth Datta has told us that from his early years he had the ambition to be a Bairagi or Sannyasi and that, at the age of 16, when travelling along the foot-hills of the Vindhyas he passed through an experience akin to *Samādhi*. However, during his school years and until he graduated from the Calcutta University, he passed through a period of inquiring doubt amounting to agnosticism and it was almost by an accident that he met Sri Rāmakrishna in a neighbour's house in Calcutta. His first meeting at Dakshineswar was memorable; and when he put the question to the Paramahamsa "Have you seen God ?" the answer came "Yes, I see Him just as I see you, only much more intensely". At a subsequent meeting, as happens in the case of many mystics, Sri Rāmakrishna shocked him into a mystic experience and thereafter young Narendra became the chosen, though at first somewhat rebellious, disciple of Sri Rāmakrishna. Sri Rāmakrishna asked him to concentrate on Advaita and especially on the *Ashtāvakrasaṁhitā*. The priceless guidance that he obtained was not only to realise that religion was not a formula but a reality, and that basically all the religions of the world are mutually harmonious and not contradictory. Furthermore, he was taught that man can obtain perfection even in the present life.

When Narendra's father died, he had to maintain the family and he wandered from office to office in a futile attempt to secure a job. Ultimately he began to earn a precarious livelihood by working in an Attorney's Office and by compiling certain translations. He continued his contact with the Master who soon taught him the technique of concentration. Many doubts persisted in his mind including a sceptic attitude towards idolatry. Sri Rāmakrishna however initiated him into the worship and realisation of the significance of Kālī, the Mother, and the *Parāsakti* and made him understand the inner meaning of image worship as an aid to concentration and *Bhakti*.

Sri Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa who was a dedicated and devout *bhakta* was, at the same time, an Advaitin; that is, a monist; and, in addition, he was one of the most original and catholic of thinkers. He, indeed, went through his life as a living commentary on the gospels of all nations. He did not found a sect and his whole life was an endeavour to break down all barriers of dogma and sectarianism. He also strove to establish absolute freedom of thought. Before he passed away he not only nominated Swami Vivekānanda as his successor but he charged him with the duty of propagating his ideas throughout the world.

For several years, Swami Vivekānanda made excursions all over India encountering great privation and innumerable difficulties. In the language of the Swamiji "when my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men. Against us were a hundred powerful organisations, struggling hard to nip us in the bud. But Rāmakrishna had given us one great gift, the desire, and the lifelong struggle, not to talk alone, but to *live the true life*". The wanderings of Swami Vivekānanda took him between 1887 and 1892 all over India, often starving, footsore and weary and taking his food from any one who offered it. He narrates the story of meeting an old man smoking on the roadside near Vrindaban. "I said to the man, 'Will you let me have a puff at your *chillum* (pipe) ? He seemed to be hesitating greatly and said, 'Sir, I am a sweeper !' Well, there was the influence of old *saṁskāras* and I immediately stepped back and resumed my journey without smoking. I had gone a short distance when the thought occurred to me that I was a Sannyasin who had renounced caste, family, prestige and everything and still I drew back as soon as the man gave himself out as a sweeper, and could not smoke the *chillum* touched by him ! The thought made me restless at heart; then I had walked on half a mile. Again, I retraced my steps and came to the sweeper whom I found still sitting there. I hastened to tell him, 'Do prepare a *chillum* of tobacco for me, my dear freind'. I paid no heed to his objection and insisted on having it. So, the man was compelled to prepare a *chillum* for me. Then I gladly had a puff at it and proceeded to Vrindaban".

In his trampings through the country he was sometimes the honoured guest of Rajas and wealthy persons all of whom were subjugated by his personal magnetism but oftener he dwelt with mendicants and the denizens of humble cottages and huts. But he did not tarry or take root anywhere and he ceaselessly continued the *pada yātrā*.

It was when he reached Madras during his travels that the idea was put to him that he should proceed to Chicago for the Parliament of Religions to be held in 1893. The Maharajah of Mysore, the Rajah of Ramnad and the Rajah of Khetri, the last of whom became a close friend and an ardent devotee of the Swami, helped and encouraged him. After encountering enormous difficulties, the Swami left Bombay in May 1893.

The story of the Parliament of Religions has been often told. Swami Vivekānanda's clarion call for unity and reconciliation and the enunciation of the harmony of all religions made a most profound impression; and after the Chicago Conference, he became an acknowledged interpreter of the Indian faith and ideals. The *New York Herald Tribune* remarked: "Vivekananda was undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him, we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to India". The Chicago Parliament was a tremendous success for Indian thought; and after his triumph there, the Swami made innumerable friends and devotees and was the recipient of hospitality and kindness during his lecture tours through the United States. Surrounded by luxury, he however lived a most abstemious and simple life and in a few months he had established not only his personal reputation but had achieved an assured place in men's minds for Indian ideals and philosophy of life. In India, however, there was very little notice taken of him excepting in Madras. From 1893 to 1895 he was incessantly at work sometimes delivering 15 lectures in a week.

He went to England in September 1895 and, here again, in his own language, he propounded a philosophy which can serve as a basis to every possible religious system in the world. He adds: "My attitude towards all of them is one of extreme sympathy and my teaching is antagonistic to none". In England as well as in America he held religious classes which were greatly appreciated and they brought him the friendship and respect of men like Prof. Max Müller. The Theosophical Society was, at first, unfriendly to him, but in August, 1896, Dr. Besant invited him to speak on *Bhakti* at the Theosophical Lodge and men like Prof. Max Müller and Prof. Deussen openly spoke enthusiastically of his work and teaching. It was early in 1897 that the Swami returned to India and was at first welcomed by the Rajah of Ramnad and thereafter was received with acclaim and enthusiasm both in Madras and in Calcutta. His audiences were numbered in thousands and they were spell-bound by his torrential enthusiasm and his magnificent and compelling oratory. He came back to India with a definite plan of starting two Centres, one in Calcutta and the other in Madras, to train young teachers and he very soon carried into practice his conviction that a well-knit organisation was essential to continue Rāmakrishna's work and message. The *Ashrams* that he started were mainly financed by American friends. On his return to India he outlined his plan of work in the following words:

"I am grateful to the lands of the West for the many warm hearts that received me with all the love that pure and disinterested souls alone could give; but my life's allegiance is to this my motherland. If I had a thousand lives, every moment of the whole series would be consecrated to your service, my countrymen, my friends !

"I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and whenever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy or holiness—the result has always been disastrous to the seceding one.

"To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom—whose foundation was contempt or hatred of others—and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.

"I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.

"My Master used to say that these names, Hindu, Christian, etc. stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. Well, we will have to work hard and must succeed.

"That is why I desire so much to have a Centre. Organisation has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done."

The Swami paid a second visit to America and took part in the Paris Conference of the History of Religions during which he expounded the inner meaning of Siva and Linga worship. Whatever money he earned in America or Europe, he forwarded to India thus helping to finance the Rāmakrishna Monastery; and personally he lived, as usual, a self-denying life. He was however fortunate in getting loving disciples like the Seviers and Sister Nivedita who looked after him with filial tenderness.

The Swami's health began to break down about the middle of 1901 and he passed away in 1902. In his own words written down at the Belur Maṭh in May 1902, he had an urgent message from India to the West and he gave it to the American and English people. At the same time he brought to India a message from the West emphasising the importance of organised and thoughtful social service and of well-conceived organisation. He has said of himself:

"At twenty years of age, I was the most unsympathetic, uncompromising fanatic; I would not walk on the footpath on the theatre side of the streets in Calcutta. At thirtythree, I could live in the same house with prostitutes and never would think of saying a word of reproach to them . . . My power of work is immensely increasing and becoming immensely effective. Some days I get into a sort of ecstasy. I feel that I must bless everyone, everything and embrace everything, and I do see that evil is a delusion. I bless the day I was born. That Love Infinite that brought me into being has guarded every one of my actions good or bad; for what am I, what was I ever, but a tool in His hands ? for whose service I have given up everything, my beloved ones, my joys.

I feel freedom is near at hand.

I am the infinite blue sky; the clouds may gather over me, but I am the same infinite blue."

The Swamiji was, by instinct and training, not only a mystic but a scholar, a poet and also a trained musician conversant with vocal and instrumental music, and we see the influence of rhythm and harmony as well as insight in his work as a spiritual teacher, as a social reformer, as a fervent patriot and an inspiring orator.

No account of Swami Vivekānanda's achievement would be complete if it did not bring into prominence the essential aspects of his authentic message which he himself announced in Madras and Calcutta.

"Each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality as in England. Artistic life marks another and so on. In India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life. If any one nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries, then that nation dies. And, therefore, if you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up exclusively either politics or society the result will be that you will become extinct. Social reform and politics have to be preached through the vitality of your religion. Every man has to make his own choice; so has every nation. We made our choice ages ago. And it is the faith in an Immortal Soul. I challenge anyone to give it up. How can you change your nature ?

"Feel therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots ! Do you feel ? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages ? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud ? Does it make you restless ? Does it make you sleepless ? Has it made you almost mad ? Are you seized with that one idea of our pervading misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, and even your own bodies ? That is the first step to become a patriot."

Another important practical side of Swamiji's Neo-Vedānta is acceptance, not mere tolerance, of other forms of worship. According to it, other forms of worship, including the worship of God through ceremonials and forms, are not in error. It is the journey from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. We should see others with eyes of love, with sympathy knowing that they are going along the same path that we are treading. So the Advaita of Swami Vivekānanda not only tolerates but accepts and respects other religions of the world as but different paths that lead to the same goal—God. It has been well said: "It is exactly in this spirit—this spirit of a world citizen—that the monks of the Rāmakrishna Order work. They are scattered in many parts of the globe, but wherever they are, they are perfectly at home. They are welcomed and supported by local people because of their great catholicity, their readiness to accept the culture of the place and to enrich it further by their own culture."

In the language of Swami Lokeśvarānanda, "thus, in ideas as well as activities, the Ramakrishna Order represents a departure from traditional monasticism. Never before in the history of India has monasticism been so actively associated with the fight against social injustice; never before has it been able to rise above the limitations of race, creed and language to an extent as now; never before has it been so completely, so tirelessly, dedicated to the cause of human welfare; never before has it been so progressive and so active a force towards the unity of mankind."

Interviewed by the *Madras Times* in February, 1897, the Swami insisted that the cause of India's downfall was the neglect of the masses. He stated: "No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses of India are well educated, well fed and well cared for." It was during this interview that the Swami declared as follows: "I want to start institutions for educating missionaries to be both spiritual and secular instructors". He emphasised that "the national ideals of India are renunciation and service".

May we prove to the world that we have learnt not only to value but actively to implement the teachings of Sri Rāmakrishna Paramahamsa as expounded and exemplified by his illustrious disciple and successor Swami Vivekānanda.

PHILOSOPHY OF SATYADHARMA

Kshitindra Kumar Sengupta
Satyadharma Mahamandal, Calcutta

My dear esteemed Truth-Seekers,

Let me, at the outset, on behalf of the followers of Satyadharma tender my sincere thanks to the organisers of this Parliament of Religions for offering me an opportunity of speaking on Satyadharma—a Cult and Religion of Truth, on this great occasion of the birth Centenary Celebration of the Holy Saint Swami Vivekananda, worthy disciple of the Holy Saint of Dakshineswar. I also pay my heartfelt respects to these Holy Saints.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been allowed ten minutes only to speak on Satyadharma, a Cult and Faith, of which I am an humble follower. Obviously, I feel I am unable in this short time, to do the barest justice to my task.

This faith is called, "Satyadharma", not because it has any real name, and, in fact, no religion has any. It is so-called because truth in a comprehensive sense is its basis. It is true in the sense that it is, was and will ever be, that it sets right all the evils and wrongs of the world and that it is approved by God—the All-Truth. Truth has the irresistible power of attracting a straying soul to the path of virtue and purifying him with the blessing of enlightenment.

Satyadharma has thus always been there and, as a matter of fact, the people of the world belonging to all the various religions have been following more or less the fundamental elements of truth. Only, like the law of gravitation, it was discovered through revelation a few decades back. The honour of discovering "Satyadharma" and having the Divine sanction for preaching it publicly for the first time in its true form and shape in this mortal world goes to Mahatma Mahim and Mahatma Gurunath. The wonderful history of their holy lives has already been published.

It is realised that there are so many ways to reach the goal. But all the roads to lead to Rome, have to follow the directions of Geography. Thus it is that "Satyadharma" has its special significance and utility. Indeed it has appropriately a message of true peace and happiness for the strife-ridden world of today, a world where untruth and want of faith appear to rule so prominently.

Truly speaking, the highly elevated souls of the other world are actually the original preachers of this faith. Out of their unbounded love for suffering humanity, they have revealed this truth to the mortal world through the media of those two Sādhakas, savants. Satyadharma affirms that a devotee with requisite qualities in him can see or perceive that a soul does not die with its body but continues to exist in lives beyond in bodies of fine and finer elements. Devotees with their qualities highly developed can communicate with the high souls of the other world.

The basic principles of Satyadharma as revealed to Mahatma Mahim and Mahatma Gurunath by this process of communication, have already been embodied and published in a booklet bearing the same name. These principles of Truth have again been very lucidly expounded and explained by Mahatma Gurunath in his masterly philosophical treatise entitled "Tattvajnana" in two volumes.

"Satyadharma" holds that Divine Will is the cause of manifestation or creation of this world. This is revealed in 'Sruti'—"Tad aikshata Ekohaṁ Bahusyam Prajayeyam"—He willed, "Unique as I am, I would manifest myself in manifold aspects". Satyadharma accepts that the universe with all the animate and inanimate objects therein is nothing but the volitional aspects of God, each such aspect actually being the name of a quality (guṇa) and as such, it does not dismiss this world as something unreal or illusory. On the contrary, the Universe is considered to be part and parcel of God, the Creator, only it does not exhaust Him or limit Him in any way. God is both transcendent to and immanent in this Universe. He is the efficient and material cause of this Universe.

In the creation of the world two aspects are discernible—One is what is called 'Jaḍaprakṛti' comprising the inanimate objects composed by the fine elements (earth, water, fire, air etc.) and the other is what is called 'Caitanyāṁśa'—comprising the spirit (soul, consciousness). God is the Synthesis of infinite number of qualities, each in its fullness of development and all combined and fused in infinite permutations. These infinite qualities that have combined in Him and have composed Him, so to say, are capable of being divided or split, as it were, only by His supreme will (which is the underlying cause of the creation) into component qualities. We should particularly note that these qualities in some aspects combine in Him as in physical mixture and others chemically. When qualities combine chemically the result is a new quality, just as Hydrogen and Oxygen when chemically combined produce water—a new substance altogether. One of these infinite qualities in so-called chemical combination is what is called Avyakta (so named as the quality cannot be expressed) and it is composed of two qualities—Ananta Sākāratva and Ananta Nirākāratva (aspects of form and inconceivable form in their infiniteness), just as water is the chemical combination of Hydrogen and Oxygen. By His all-powerful volition He willed to divide or split Himself to have a taste of and test His own infinite qualities in various combinations and this is described as His līlā or *svaguṇa-parīkshā*, i.e. creation. In this process of creation He divided "Avyakta" into Ananta Sākāratva and Ananta Nirākāratva as has already been said. The quality of Ananta Sākāratva that thus came into play formed the basis of creation of Jaḍajagat—comprising the elements, objects perceptible to the senses, various bodies, senses and even Prāṇa and Manas (vital and mental forces). The part of the creation representing 'Caitanyāṁśa (soul, spirit) is, however, a direct creation or splitting into parts of His Absolute Being, Composite Self (Saccidānandarūpa). A man is thus composed of a body pertaining to Jaḍajagat and of a soul partaining directly to the Absolute Self only as a part. The idea of part or formation of parts (Aṁśa or Aṁśikaraṇa) is rather most confusing and incomprehensible; but some workable understanding is possible if, for example, we try to think of knowledge in fullness and knowledge as partially revealed in the created world in man.

The world (in its physical and spiritual aspects) is thus nothing but the exposition of Elemental (jaḍa) qualities such as length, breadth, hardness, whiteness, smoothness etc. on the one hand, and of spiritual (ādhyātmika) qualities such as knowledge, love, truth, kindness, charity, forgiveness, purity, frankness etc. Elemental qualities are perceptible to our senses but not so the spiritual qualities. And as a matter of fact, the real essence of man's being lies in its spiritual qualities. Satyadharma draws a pointed attention to this fact and asks us to cultivate these qualities that each individual inherently possesses in a more or less undeveloped form, different from each other, till the development goes on and reaches the point of near fullness of each quality, the number of qualities being also increased towards infinity and it results in the ultimate synthesis of more and more number of qualities—which is an endless process. It is, however, possible for man by developing the qualities to realise his true self, his one-ness in that or those qualities with the Supreme Being.

From the above it is clear that according to Satyadharma, perfect identification with or complete merging in or with the One and Supreme God as described above is not possible, since from the very nature of the threefold infiniteness of God, one may approach the goal more and more but can never attain it. Yet the individual soul partakes more and more of the Divine bliss as he progresses.

Against the background of such a scheme of creation and the relation between Man (created soul) and God, Satyadharma enjoins two-fold rituals for its followers, viz. (1) Upāsanā, i.e., the worship of God, the All-powerful, All-good, All-truth, All-love and so on—the receptacle of infinite qualities in infinite fullness and infinite combinations, and (2) guṇa-sādhanā, i.e., the practice and cultivation of such qualities in daily life in course of our behaviour with all the objects lying around us. The true object and aim of life finds fruition in these processes.

The mission of man's life starts its course of fulfilment when he realises the all-loving aspects of God and in the absorption of that unbounded love plunges into the ocean of eternal bliss. His advance towards the goal is further accelerated when he is able to liberate his own self from the limitations of his embodiment. Then follows the process of gradual integration of the soul, a part or fraction as it is, into a complete rounded whole, infinite as It is.

According to Satyadharma, different godheads, incarnations and saints are also partial manifestations of the Supreme God and none, not even the greatest ever incarnation in this created world, can claim a total equality with the Supreme God.

To facilitate worship of the Supreme God by recounting His endless qualities and proper cultivation of these qualities in daily life, Satyadharma has analysed them with wonderful scientific precision. In fact, it is a unique thesis on the godly qualities and that alone, if nothing else, constitutes a new philosophy not propounded and preached before in this world, and this is worthy of respectful study, contemplation and realisation. We, men of the world, mostly live in the physical and vital planes, a few in the mental plane, but Satyadharma shows the way of living in the spiritual plane of our existence. Those blessed people who can so live appreciate the beauties and the truths of the new philosophy about qualities propounded and revealed by Satyadharma. A moral life that is advocated by most of the saints and sages is at best within the range of the mental plane of our being, but the gospels of Satyadharma pertain to a higher plane, the spiritual plane, and make moral living meaningful and show its limitations. Science can bring about revolutionary changes and improvements in things that lie in the physical, vital and to some extent mental planes, but it can scarcely touch and stir the spiritual life of man. It can thus ensure comforts, but Satyadharma shows the way to true happiness and bliss, without contradicting science.

The way in the main, consists in the soulful prayer, the method of which has been detailed with scientific analysis in Satyadharma in a manner scarcely attempted before. Broadbased on the elaborate treatment of qualities of the soul, the system of prayer forms another unique feature revealed by Satyadharma. Prayer is in vogue in every religion in some form or other, but to be effective it must be complete in its essential parts. Satyadharma of course stresses that prayer is best done through the medium of songs pouring out the pent-up feelings that lie deep in the heart. The sāttvika stages, viz. weeping, perspiring, trembling, samādhi automatically follow in no time and the blissfulness of a very high order is experienced as a result of temporary approximation with God—loving father, mother, friend and guide. The outlook of life as a whole is changed and no wonder man starts experiencing things and states of mind beyond the ken of the sense. The uplift is so quick and far-reaching in the guṇa-sādhanā process advocated by Satyadharma, that people following the yoga process may wonder and may not readily believe it. The whole thing is, however, no monopoly of any group of men. It is open for any and everybody to try and experiment to obtain the results. What is obtained by yoga is easily obtainable by guṇa-sādhanā, being a shorter process; but conversely what is obtainable by the latter cannot sometimes be achieved by the former.

Satyadharma has been given unto the world for the redemption of the down-trodden and the afflicted souls of the world. But its scope extends beyond this mortal world. In fact, it looks upon this world as a speck in the context of the immensity of creation and transcends it and goes higher and higher. It serves as a veritable bridge connecting this world with the worlds beyond and opens up a vista of endless worlds where souls freed from the trammels of the gross bodies roam and dwell in unbounded peace.

Satyadharma with its philosophy of qualities explains and solves all the various vexed questions of birth, life, death, God, Nature, end or object of life, redemption, virtues and vices, why God should be worshipped, why man should be good and moral and acquire qualities, what is true happiness, how to attain it, why there are the various ills of the world, so on and so forth.

A little reflection will show that man has been born in this world and has been placed in the midst of almost endless errors and unrealities and that he has an innate striving, an endless urge to sift the phenomena to find out the true realities behind them all. To the extent that the veils covering the appearances have been pulled down, man is said to have progressed and developed. This process of evolution from stage to stage and from untruths to truths is endless, and the time taken is of little consequence, as the soul that benefits is beyond time. We may in this connection recall the time that the world took to establish the simple truth behind the apparent daily circling by the Sun round the Earth. So it was for Isaac Newton to find out the Laws of Gravitation and light etc. pulling down the veils that covered so many appearances. The Law of Gravitation as we know, was ultimately found wanting in some respects and the gap was filled up by Mahatma Einstein whose explanation of the scheme of the heavenly bodies, their movements, time and space etc. was more philosophic than scientific in the popular sense. Great as these strides are, the first and foremost error that confronts man is his erroneous belief that his spiritual self is co-existent and co-terminus with his mortal body. It is Satyadharma that successfully and completely resolves this primal error of man's identification of his soul with the body. It does not only establish the separate existence of soul apart from body but also gives a full description of its nature, character, scope, growth and purpose of its eternal life.

According to Satyadharma, it is indispensable for every man to be initiated in its unique manner to this cult through a requisitely qualified preceptor (*guru*) who is considered to be only next to God. The *mantras* of initiation are in the potent Vaidika words—the one original language from which all the languages have flowed. This language has also been revealed to the seers of this religion and is yet to be openly preached to the world. The world has to be worthy of it.

We thank God and bow unto Him that He granted the revelation of such a religion to be preached to the mortals that we are. It is but another proof of His infinite fatherly love for His children, the limbs of His limb.

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF THE HARMONY OF RELIGIONS

(*Summary of a talk given at the Parliament of Religions*)

Swami Nikhilananda
New York

Hindu seers and prophets from the pre-historic period of the Vedas to Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa of modern times have taught the harmony of religions as a fundamental tenet of Hinduism. We read in the Vedas: "Reality is One: sages call it by different names." The Upanishad says that as different rivers, coming from different sources, associated with different names and forms, following various courses, straight or crooked, ultimately merge in the ocean, so also the earnest devotees of different faiths, pursuing different disciplines and accepting different beliefs, ultimately free themselves of names and forms and become one in Brahman or Pure Spirit. Śrī Kṛishṇa teaches in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* that wherever one sees great powers, light, and extraordinary spirituality, there is a manifestation of the Godhead.

Assimilation and not repudiation is seen even in popular Hinduism. The non-Aryans worshipped such objects as animals, birds and serpents. The Aryans did not destroy them but gave them a place in the Hindu pantheon. Thus the bull, the owl, the bird, the peacock, the lion, the snake, have become associated with Śiva, Lakshmī, Vishṇu, Kārtikeya, Durgā and Kṛishṇa. These sub-human deities also receive their appropriate offering at the time of worship. Hindus showed respect and tolerance to the early Jews who came to India before the time of Christ, the Christian followers of the Apostle St. Thomas, the Parsis, the Moslems, and the modern Christians. Kabir, born of a Moslem father and a low-caste Hindu mother, is venerated equally by Hindus and Moslems. The Semitic monotheism was established by the rejection of other gods. Hinduism accepts all deities as parts of the same Reality.

Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa occupies a unique place among religious prophets as the demonstrator of the harmony of religions. At first he accepted Kālī, the Divine Mother, as his chosen Ideal and experienced supreme bliss through Her vision. Then the desire arose in his mind to follow other ideals of Hinduism. He worshipped Rāma, Kṛishṇa, Śiva and also contemplated the non-dual Brahman. He realized that all these paths lead to the same goal. He practised the disciplines of Islam and Christianity which also finally led him to the same Reality. His sincerity of purpose, single-minded devotion and passionate love of God broke down all barriers of dogmas, creeds and beliefs. Thus he taught that different religions are so many paths to attain the same Ideal. He discovered the true meaning of the universal religion which is not a new faith with new rituals, disciplines and beliefs, but the foundation of all religions and the ultimate goal to be realized by all sincere seekers. The universal religion is identical with Pure Spirit or Brahman which transcends all names, forms and attributes. Its experience cuts asunder all the knots of the heart, dissolves all doubts and bestows peace, blessedness and immortality.

Why did Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa, born in an orthodox Hindu family, and devoted to the Hindu traditions which he observed until the last moment of his life, practise other faiths ? It would seem that he wanted to encourage devotees of all religions in the pursuit of their respective disciplines with sincerity and earnestness. He venerated all Prophets, Incarnations and Messengers of God, all of whom he believed communed with the Godhead, were blessed with the same spiritual experiences and commissioned by God to teach mankind. They formulated their teachings, however, to suit different times, places and temperaments. Thus one sees apparent differences in what the great Prophets taught. It must be emphasized that though the teachings of the Prophets may differ, their ultimate experience is the same. The harmony of religions as taught by Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa is a great contribution for people of modern times; it shows the way of reconciling friction and hostility of different faiths which have marred the fair name of religion and alienated many thinkers from God.

Is the harmony of religions taught by Hinduism based merely upon the scriptures and the statements of the mystics ? If that were so it would not meet with universal acceptance. For instance, Christians quote the *Bible* to prove that Christianity is the only true religion. Christ is reported to have said: "I am the Ressurection and the Way." Likewise the Moslems quote from the *Korān* to prove that Islam is the only true religion, Allah the only God and Mohammed His only Prophet. Thus, reliance upon the scriptures or upon the reported statements of the founders of religions will not eliminate religious friction or bigotry.

Is there a philosophical basis for the acceptance of harmony of religions ? Does it meet with the tests of Truth ? According to Vedānta, the great Truth is free from quarrel and friction, and conducive to the welfare of all. Scripture and personal experience must be supported by reason.

Now we intend to discuss the philosophical foundation of the Vedic statement that Truth is one and the sages call it by different names.

The Ultimate Reality, according to non-dualism, is called Brahman, which is Pure Spirit, Self-Existent, incorporeal, without name, form, or attributes. It is One without a second and therefore free from desire and action. From the standpoint of Brahman or the undifferentiated Consciousness, there is neither creation nor created beings. Brahman has been experienced by the illumined seers in the depth of meditation, supported by the scriptures and indicated by reason.

Though from the standpoint of Brahman there is no act of creation, from the relative standpoint the fact of creation is admitted. Describing creation, Vedānta says that a thought arises in the mind of Brahman: It is One but It wants to be many. Why or how such a thought should arise in the Incorporeal Spirit, Vedānta does not explain. It cannot be understood by the finite mind which itself is a part of creation. Vedānta calls this phenomenon, *māyā*, which means that an inscrutable power inherent in Brahman is responsible for creation. At this stage the creation belongs to the realm of thought. The creator is like an artist or a poet who first conceives the picture or poem in his mind. Thus the Attributeless Spirit is endowed with attributes, that is to say, the desire for creation, preservation and destruction. Now Brahman is called the *Saguṇa* Brahman or Brahman endowed with attributes. It is the Creative Energy without a name or form.

One manifestation of the *Saguṇa* Brahman is the Divine Incarnation who appears on earth from time to time to restore spiritual values when wickedness prevails. Another manifestation of It is the *Īśwara* or the Creator-God, who is conceived of as a person with name and attributes. His attributes are omniscience, omnipotence, majesty and compassion. According to Hinduism no evil attributes, such as anger or hatred, can be associated with the Creator-God. He neither punishes nor shows favour. Persons suffer from the result of their own actions. *Īśwara* is ever anxious to draw to Himself all created beings who seek liberation. He projects names and forms out of Himself—the physical bodies from His lower aspect and life and consciousness from His higher aspect. The illustration is given of the spider and its web. This Creator-God is the Personal God of various religions called by different names, such as Allah, Jehovah, Father-in-heaven or Vishṇu. He is the object of worship and meditation. He listens to sincere prayer and fulfils the desires of His devotees.

What we have said before can be explained by the illustration of a seed. The hard seed may be compared to the Pure Spirit. When it is soaked in water there is an inner activity before it splits and projects the first shoot. The seed in this state may be compared to the *Saguṇa* Brahman. The first shoot which afterwards becomes the tree with its branches, flowers, fruits and seeds is the Creator-God.

From the Creator-God evolves the universe of multiplicity—first, the five material elements, then the different world systems, next the physical bodies and finally the food and drink which sustain them. The Creator-God then enters into these bodies and animates them with life and consciousness. This is a brief account of the process of evolution. Involution takes place in the reverse order. At the time of Cosmic dissolution, the material elements and the life-breaths first go into a state of non-differentiation, then into the Creator-God, next into the *Saguṇa* Brahman or Universal Energy and finally into the Pure Spirit or Brahman. The process of liberation of an individual follows more or less the same pattern. The seeker after liberation practises spiritual disciplines and worships and communes with the Personal God. Next, the devotee and the Personal God merge in the *Saguṇa* Brahman or the Universal Energy, and finally into Pure Spirit.

This mystical process was experienced by Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa. One reads in his life that while meditating on Christ he first merged into Christ and then both he and Christ merged into the *Saguṇa* Brahman which was followed by the experience of total identity with Pure Spirit or attributeless Brahman. The same thing happened when he communed with Allah and various deities of Hinduism. It is reported in the life of Swāmī Vivekānanda that at one time he used to see visions of various deities. Then they stopped. When he told Holy Mother, Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa's wife, about it, she said that in the end the deities, prophets and incarnations, endowed with names and forms, merge in the Creative Energy or the Great Mother.

A religion which accepts the Personal God with a name, a form and attributes as the Ultimate Reality, cannot be the universal religion. It teaches the doctrine of exclusive salvation and speaks of its devotees as the "chosen people". Thus it breeds hatred and hostility towards other religions and Prophets. If a Christian hardens himself against Buddha, he really hardens himself against Christ, for both Christ and Buddha are Incarnations of the same Divine Spirit. Thus there are today enough religions to hate one another, but not enough religious spirit to bind together men in love and friendship.

The harmony of religions can be explained philosophically only on the basis of creation and dissolution as described in the non-dualistic Vedānta. There cannot be any religious harmony if the Personal God is accepted as the Ultimate Reality. Allah, Father-in-heaven and Vishṇu have different names and forms and are worshipped through different rituals and symbols. Thus every religion has its own scripture, mythology, dogma and belief. No agreement among religions is possible on the basis of rituals, mythologies or dogmas. A Christian says that the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove. The Hindus accept symbols of rivers, fire, sun, and so on. To the Jews the Ark is the holiest symbol. A devotee accepts the symbol of his own religion as the most sacred and regards the symbols of other religions as heathenish. To the Christian the sacrament is the right ritual.

While he worships he stands up, kneels down, or sits. The Christian Church believes in the apostolic succession from Peter, and the Roman Catholics believe in the ascension of Virgin Mary in her physical body. The Muslims, the Hindus, the Jews have their own rituals, symbols and mythologies. All people cannot be persuaded to accept the same dogmas and beliefs. In the past, efforts in this direction through persuasion, bribery or the sword often resulted in terrible suffering of the non-conformists. Many intellectuals of modern times, disgusted with religious hostilities, give up their respective faith and cultivate the arts and music, or engage themselves in social service to enjoy inner peace.

As Swāmī Vivekānanda said, diversity of religions is necessary, nay, inevitable. As long as there exist different temperaments and tastes these differences will remain. Geography often influences religious behaviour. Christians living in the cold climate manifest their religious spirit through activity. Islam, having originated in the desert of Arabia, stresses austerity. Hindus living in a tropical climate and a fertile country where much effort is not needed to earn a livelihood, stress meditation. Different religions satisfy the spiritual hunger of people of different types in a manner similar to city restaurants which prepare foods in various styles to cater to different tastes. It must be stressed that different articles of food nourish bodies through the same basic protein and carbohydrate. Likewise communion with God through any ritual, symbol or belief, deepens the love and the purity of the devotees. Different religions can learn from one another. Thus Hinduism can teach the art of meditation, Christianity social service, Buddhism inner peace through desirelessness, Judaism justice and righteousness, and Islam equality and brotherhood.

As long as different minds exist, different sects will remain, and churches, temples and mosques will also exist as places of worship. If they are destroyed by a fiat from a dictator, spiritual life will disappear from the earth. Places of worship deepen the spiritual feeling of the worshippers. Rituals give a man relief from the monotony of ordinary life. They are the first manifestations of religious enthusiasm and protect the beginners from worldly distractions. They can be likened to a hedge around a young plant, or the husk which preserves the kernel. When the plant grows into a big tree the hedge is removed, and when the seed germinates the husk drops off.

As long as a man regards himself as a psycho-physical complex, admits his individuality and takes the outside world to be real, so long must he worship the Personal God in one form or another. Such worship deepens his devotion. In distress he must pray to God. He feels the love of God protecting him like a shield.

Incarnations and Prophets who are the special manifestations of the *Saguṇa* Brahman, appear on earth at a time of spiritual crisis. They are the living examples of Godliness. Through them it is easier to establish an intimate relationship with God. Intense devotion to the Personal God and Incarnations ultimately leads a devotee to the realization of Creative Energy and finally Pure Spirit.

Tired of religious quarrels many aspirants seek a universal religion which all can accept. Two main attempts have been made in the past in this direction. One is to proclaim a particular religion as the universal religion and impose it upon all by force or persuasion. This attempt is responsible for the Crusades, the Inquisition and the Jehad. The second attempt is to create a new religion incorporating into it liberal, non-controversial and ethical principles of the major religions—an intellectual religion without rituals or dogmas. Such a religion appeals to certain minds. It endures for a short time only. Like a bouquet made from cut garden flowers, such a religion does not last long because it has no roots. No great religion is the product of intellect. A religion is rooted in the spiritual experiences of a Prophet or a Seer. Thus Christianity is based upon the experience of Christ, Judaism on the experience of the Prophets of the Old Testament, Buddhism on the experience of Buddha, and Hinduism on the experience of the Vedic Seers.

But as Swāmī Vivekānanda said, a universal religion does not have to be created—it already exists. It is the basis of all religions. It holds together all religions like a string that holds a pearl necklace. This universal religion which every sincere seeker wants to experience, has no location in time or place. It encourages all devotees to worship their own Chosen Ideal—Christ or Kṛishṇa, and admits the authenticity of all the Prophets of the past and the present and keeps the door open for others to come, embraces in its infinite arms all human beings, sees no essential difference between the lowest savage and the highest mystic, shows no intolerance, and devotes its full force to bring out the potential divinity of all living beings.

Such a universal religion is to be discovered as existing in all faiths. There is no such thing as my religion or your religion, my national religion or your national religion, but there is only one Religion of which the different faiths are so many aspects. Religion, as it is practised, is not the goal but the means to attain a goal which transcends all rituals and beliefs.

How to discover this Universal Religion ? A man should begin with the rituals, beliefs and disciplines of the religion in which he is born, adhere to them, and gradually commune with his Chosen Ideal or Personal God. Then he should further deepen his earnestness and realize the Universal Energy which is the ultimate source of creation, preservation and dissolution. At the end, he realizes the Pure Spirit or the Undifferentiated Consciousness. This Pure Spirit is the real basis of the harmony of religions.